

In accordance with its [Funding Guidelines](#) of 01 January 2022
(as last amended), the FWF has issued the following application guidelines for

Principal Investigator Projects

(previously Stand-Alone Projects)

effective as of March 15, 2022)

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Please note: Key terms used in these Application Guidelines are explained in the document [Definition of Terms](#) (Ad-personam-mode).

1 General Information

1.1 Aim of the programme

The aim is to fund clearly defined basic research proposals (hereinafter referred to as “projects”) of excellent academic quality at an international level. *Basic research* refers to research that is knowledge-oriented and whose value is primarily defined by its significance for the advancement of science and scholarship. In general, one principal investigator is responsible for planning and carrying out Stand-Alone projects; however, this person can collaborate with national and/or international research partners.

1.2 Submission

There are no submission deadlines for this programme; applications can be submitted at any time. Applications must be submitted online at <https://elane.fwf.ac.at>.

Once the application has been submitted online, a PDF cover sheet will be generated. The application shall not be considered officially submitted until the FWF receives the signed and stamped cover sheet (see also [section 2.2.3](#)).

1.3 Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible to apply are researchers working in Austria who possess excellent research qualifications, sufficient time resources, and have access to the infrastructure necessary to carry out the project submitted. No specific academic title is needed, nor is Austrian citizenship required; however, the project must be carried out in Austria or under the auspices of an Austrian research institution at which the principal investigator works. Applications for Stand-Alone projects may only be submitted by an individual natural person; institutions or companies may not apply.

Please note that the number of ongoing/approved projects in which one researcher can serve as principal investigator is limited to three in the Stand-Alone projects, International Programmes, Clinical Research and Arts-Based Research programmes. Further information on restrictions concerning the number of ongoing projects and limits on the submission of applications can be found at [Restriction on the number of projects](#).

For information on submitting an application from abroad, see the FWF website at [Applications from abroad](#).

1.4 What types of projects can be funded?

Funding may be requested for projects in basic research that are clearly defined, convincingly described in terms of objectives and methods, and limited in time (no more than 48 months). Aspects of a research project that go beyond the realm of science and

scholarship may be mentioned, but they will not play a part in the assessment of whether the project should be funded. Double funding is not permitted (see [Funding guidelines](#)).

If the structure and the content of the project are such as to potentially require subsequent Stand-Alone projects, please refer to the supplementary information on [long-term projects](#).

1.5 What requirements must be met to apply?

Researchers are eligible to apply if their publication record over the last five years has been internationally visible and if their current career stage is commensurate with the career progression expected in their field. The following criteria are decisive in assessing their publication record—documented in the “Publication list” (see [section 2.4](#))—and in initiating the review process:

- **Quality assurance:** Most relevant in assessing the applicant’s publication record are those publications that have undergone a quality assurance procedure in line with international standards (peer review or an equivalent procedure; in the natural and life sciences, peer review is expected). Journals must usually be listed in Web of Science, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). In the case of journals that are not listed in these databases, or in the case of monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, or other publication types, the applicant must provide a link to the publisher’s website, describing the respective quality assurance procedure. If no description should be available, it is the applicant’s responsibility to provide evidence that the publication has been subject to an appropriate quality assurance procedure.
- **International visibility:** Most of the applicant’s publications must have a wider than national reach. In the natural sciences, life sciences, and social sciences, most of the publications listed must be in English.
- **Number/scope and quality** of the applicant’s publications must be commensurate with the expected career progression and the field concerned. At least two publications must have undergone a quality assurance procedure and must be internationally visible with a substantial and independent contribution on the part of the applicant. At least one publication with first or last or corresponding authorship in the life sciences is required.

Should an applicant fail to meet one or more of the above criteria, the applicant must include an explanation with the application. In cases of doubt, the decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide whether the research qualifications are adequate.

1.5.1 Consideration of career breaks

The FWF will take justified career breaks (e.g., parental leave, caring for a family member, long-term illness, or research position in the non-academic sector) into consideration in assessing the applicant’s eligibility to apply. Relevant information can be included in the academic CV and thus also be available to the reviewers.

1.5.2 Inclusion of disabled and chronically ill people

The FWF will also take any exceptions to typical career paths due to disability and/or chronic illness into consideration in assessing the applicant's eligibility to apply. Relevant information can be included in the academic CV and thus also be available to the reviewers.

1.6 What types of funding can be requested?

Project-specific costs are eligible for funding. These include personnel and non-personnel costs that are necessary for carrying out the project and that go beyond the resources provided by the infrastructure of the research institution. The FWF does not finance the infrastructure or basic equipment of research institutions.

For information on requesting funding for the personnel costs of the principal investigator (= applicants who intend their salary to be paid from the grant), see [Information on funding the principal investigator's \(PI's\) salary](#).

The National Research Partner form should be completed for costs arising from the collaboration with [national research partners](#) that are not invoiced to the principal investigator, but have to be handled directly between the research institution of the national research partner and the FWF.

Please note that exaggerated costs may represent a reason for rejecting an application, even one that is considered excellent in terms of content. The number of reviews necessary for approval depends on the amount of funds requested (see [section 3](#)).

1.7 International programmes

Applications as part of international research funding programmes (ERA-NET calls, joint projects, etc.) should follow the guidelines for Stand-Alone projects (as described here) or, in the case of clinical research proposals, those of the [Clinical Research programme](#).

Please note however that these international programmes also have additional application requirements. For further information, see [International programmes](#) on the FWF website.

2 Application content and form

2.1 Sections of the application

For an application to be complete, it must contain the following sections:

- 1) **Academic abstract** in **English** comprising no more than 3,000 characters (incl. spaces; no formulas or special characters). The academic abstract will be used to inform potential reviewers about the project. The abstract must be subdivided into the following sections using the given English terms:

- Wider research context / theoretical framework
- Hypotheses / research questions / objectives
- Approach / methods
- Level of originality / innovation
- Primary researchers involved

Where options are given (indicated by slashes), please choose an option that is appropriate for your project.

2) **Project description:**

A project description on no more than 20 consecutively numbered pages, incl. table of contents, list of abbreviations, headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.

The project description must also include the following annexes on additional pages:

- Annex 1: List of literature cited in the application (References) on no more than 5 pages;
- Annex 2: Information on research institution(s) and justification of requested funding;
- Annex 3: Academic CV and description of previous research achievements (no more than 3 pages per CV);
- Annex 4 (optional): Collaboration letters of national and international cooperation partners (no more than 1 page per letter);

The project description including these annexes must be uploaded as a single file called *proposal.pdf*. The FWF will send this document to the reviewers.

3) **Attachments to be uploaded individually:**

- Mandatory: publication list for the last 5 years, broken down into quality assured and non-quality assured (see also [section 2.4](#)).
- Where applicable: cover letter; list of reviewers to be excluded; report on results, or final report for follow-up applications (see also [section 2.7](#)); for resubmissions: overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application and response(s) to reviews; vendor quotes for equipment, etc.

4) **Completed forms:**

- Required forms: academic abstract, application form, cost breakdown form and *co-authors* form;
- Optional forms: *national research partners* form, *national/international cooperation arrangements* form.

2.2 Formal requirements and submission of application

2.2.1 Language of application

To allow applications to be reviewed by international experts, applications must be submitted in English. If desired, a version in German or another language may be added as a supplement; however, submission solely in German or another project-relevant language other than English is permitted only in exceptional cases. Such exceptions apply exclusively to applications from the fields of linguistic and literary studies which concern only texts in German or languages other than English. In all such cases, it is absolutely necessary to consult the responsible project officers in the FWF [specialist departments](#) prior to application and then submit an academic abstract for the project as well as a brief yet convincing statement explaining why submission in a language other than English is justified for substantive academic reasons. The final decision shall be made by the decision-making bodies of the FWF.

2.2.2 Formatting

The continuous text in the project description, annexes 1-3, and the attachments (except for vendor quotes) must be written in 11 pt. font with 15-20 pt. spacing and at least 2 cm margins. Applicants must comply strictly with all upper limits (e.g., number of pages, attachments, etc.).

Citations in the text and the list of works cited (*References*) in the application must be in line with the conventions of the respective discipline, preferably according to a widely used style guide (e.g., *Chicago Manual of Style*, *APA Publication Manual*). Applicants are free to choose the citation conventions or style guide they prefer, but they must apply them/it consistently throughout the application. If available, a [DOI address](#) (DOI = Digital Object Identifier) or another [persistent identifier](#) should be used for the literature cited.

2.2.3 Submitting the application

The application must be submitted online at <https://elane.fwf.ac.at>.

To submit the application online, applicants are required to register at the address shown above. All the necessary forms must then be filled out online; additional documents such as the project description are to be uploaded as well. For additional information, see the '[User manual – elane](#)'.

1) Required parts of the application:

a) Files:

- *Proposal.pdf* (project description incl. annexes 1-3 and where applicable 4, with PDF bookmarks, at least for the major sections)
- *Publication_list.pdf* (publication list of all the key project participants for the last 5 years, broken down into quality assured and non-quality assured)

b) Forms:

- Academic abstract in English
- Application form
- Cost breakdown
- Co-authors (mandatory information)
- National research partners (if applicable)
- National and international cooperation arrangements (if applicable)

2) File uploads – if applicable:

- *Cover_Letter.pdf* (= accompanying letter)
- *Negative_list.pdf* (= list of reviewers who should be excluded)
- *Follow.pdf* (= result report or final report of the previous project in case of follow-up applications)
- *Overview_Revision.pdf* (= in the case of resubmission, overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application)
- *Revision.pdf* (= in the case of resubmission, an overall response to all the reviewers or, if preferred, a short response to each reviewer saved in a separate file: *Revision_A.pdf*, *Revision_B.pdf* etc.)
- *Quotes_equipment.pdf*
- *Quotes_other_costs.pdf*

Once the application has been submitted, a [PDF cover sheet](#) will be generated automatically.

This cover sheet must be sent to the FWF

- a) by conventional mail with the handwritten signature of the applicant and the handwritten signature(s) of the authorised signatory or signatories of the research institute(s) and the stamps of the research institute(s), *or*
- b) by email (office@fwf.ac.at) with a scan of the signature(s) and stamps(s) of the research institute(s) and **signed using the applicant's qualified electronic signature ([Citizen Card/Mobile Phone Signature](#))**, *or*
- c) by email (office@fwf.ac.at) and signed using the qualified electronic signature of the research institute(s) and the applicant.

The application shall not be considered officially submitted until the FWF receives the cover sheet signed in the manner described above. Please note that a scanned version with signatures and stamps but **not signed using the applicant's qualified electronic signature** (Citizen Card/Mobile Phone Signature) is **not sufficient**.

2.3 Project description and annexes

The project description must comprise no more than 20 pages and include a table of contents as well as the contents described in [section 2.3.1](#). Annexes must be attached to the

project description in the order indicated in [section 2.3.2](#). Only the project description including the annexes will be forwarded to the reviewers.

2.3.1 The proposed research

- 1) State of the art of relevant international research (including own preliminary work, if applicable) and relation of the project to this context
- 2) Clearly defined aims and hypotheses or research question(s) of the project
- 3) Description of the project's anticipated level of originality or innovation¹
- 4) Methods
- 5) Intended [cooperation arrangements](#) (national and/or international) as part of the planned project should be explained. This explanation should specify the people with whom the applicant aims to collaborate, what the subject of the intended cooperation arrangement(s) will be and what they will contribute to the project. All of the national and/or international cooperation arrangements that were stated to be essential in the project description should be listed on the *cooperation arrangements* form and may be evidenced by a collaboration letter.
- 6) Work plan and timeline
- 7) Research-related qualifications of the researchers involved
- 8) All potential ethical, safety-related, or regulatory aspects² of the submitted project and how the applicant plans to deal with them must be described in a separate section. These questions should be addressed briefly in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any ethical issues.
- 9) A separate section must describe what sex-specific and gender-related issues³ the planned project may potentially give rise to, and how the applicant intends to deal with them. These must be addressed briefly in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any sex-specific and gender-related issues.

¹ Examples of applications worthy of funding include, among others:

- Research on new ideas and/or examination of new research questions,
- Application or development of new research methods, new technologies, or original approaches to solving research questions,
- Application or modification of existing methods, technologies, or approaches to new research questions.

Please note that the next logical step or the incremental further development of published data is not considered to be innovative or original.

² For instance, the European Commission's [Ethics for Researchers](#) or [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) can serve as a guide here.

³ Positioning and reflecting on the research approaches planned for the project in terms of sex-specific and gender-related issues, for instance: Is the research approach likely to produce sex-specific and gender-related findings? If so, what findings? How and where are these integrated into the research approach? (For information on checking the relevance of sex-specific and gender-related issues to a project, see <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/about-the-fwf/gender-issues/fix-the-knowledge/fix-the-knowledge-detail/>)

2.3.2 Annex 1: List of references

- List of literature cited in the application on no more than 5 pages

2.3.3 Annex 2: Financial aspects

The template for the description of projected costs can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

- Information on the research institution and those of the national research partners
 - Existing personnel (not financed by the FWF; usually, the principal investigator and the personnel of the research institutions)
 - Existing infrastructure
- Information on the funding requested
 - Explain briefly why the personnel requested is needed (type(s) of requested position(s), job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project);
 - Explain briefly why the non-personnel cost applied for are justified (equipment, materials, travel, and other costs). If funding for equipment is requested, applicants must explain why this does not constitute part of the basic equipment of the given research environment – see [section 2.5.3](#).

2.3.4 Annex 3: CVs and description of previous research achievements

The academic CVs and research achievements (for the principal investigator as well as a maximum of three other project [participants](#)) should be described on no more than three pages per person.

2.3.4.1 Required contents for academic CVs

- Name and contact details of the person, address of the research institution, and relevant websites. It is also required to provide a publicly available link (hyperlink) to a list of all publications; the use of [ORCID](#) (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) is expressly recommended for this purpose.
- List of academic milestones and relevant positions held to date (with a brief explanation of any career gaps, if applicable).
- Main areas of research and short statement of the most important research results achieved to date.

2.3.4.2 Required description of previous research achievements

- Academic publications: list of no more than ten of the most important published or accepted academic publications (journal articles, monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, preprints, proceedings, etc.); for each publication, if

available, either a [DOI address](#) or another [persistent identifier](#) must be indicated. In accordance with the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), journal-based metrics like the journal impact factor should not be included.

- Additional research achievements: list of no more than ten of the most important research achievements apart from academic publications (such as awards, conference papers, keynote speeches, important research projects, research data, software, codes, exhibitions, knowledge transfers, science communication, licenses, or patents).

2.3.5 Annex 4: Collaboration letters (optional)

- Confirmations (collaboration letters each no more than 1 page) of national and international cooperation partners that the project description clearly identifies as essential for the project.

2.4 Mandatory attachment: Publication list

A list of all research publications⁴ over the last five years (broken down into “quality assured publications” and “other publications”, see [section 1.5](#)) of all participants for whom an academic curriculum vitae is enclosed, as well as for all project members for whom personnel costs are requested (merged into the document *publication_list.pdf*). This list – which will not be forwarded to the reviewers – is used to assess applicants’ eligibility and helps the FWF to speed up the process of finding reviewers who do not have a conflict of interest.

2.5 What project-specific costs can be funded?

Funding may only be requested for the following cost categories.

2.5.1 Personnel costs

Only those personnel may be applied for who are needed in addition to the existing personnel resources for the realization of the project and only to the extent required for the project.

The available legal categories of employment are contracts of employment for full-time or part-time employees and marginal employment. A part-time (50%) contract of employment for “student assistants,” which equates to 20 hours per week, may be requested for researchers who have not yet completed a master’s or diploma degree programme in the relevant subject area.

⁴ Publication lists must include: all authors, complete titles, journal, year, and page numbers. For each publication, if available, either a [DOI address](#) or another [persistent identifier](#) should be indicated; for publications with more than 20 authors, an “et al.” reference can be used.

The current FWF salary scale ("[Personnel costs and salary scale](#)" or, for graduates of medicine in Austria, "[Personnel costs and salary scale – Graduates of medical studies](#)"), indicates the current personnel costs for which funding may be requested. The FWF grants an annual salary adjustment to compensate for inflation, which is applied automatically to all existing contracts of employment in Stand-Alone projects. Please note that for doctoral students, contracts of employment of no more than 75% (which equates to 30 hours per week) may be requested.

2.5.2 Grant-salaried principal investigators

The FWF defines a grant-salaried principal investigator as a principal investigator whose salary is to be paid from the funding provided for the project. Female applicants are also eligible to apply for funding for professional development.

A detailed description of the requirements and application procedure can be found in the [Information on funding the principal investigator's \(PI's\) salary](#).

2.5.3 Equipment costs

Funding for equipment may only be requested if the equipment is specifically required for the project and if it is not part of the institution's existing infrastructure. "Infrastructure" is considered to include all equipment (and components for the equipment) that must be available in a modern research institution to conduct basic research in the relevant discipline at an internationally competitive level. Thus, items such as computers (laptops, etc.) are considered to be part of the standard infrastructure and therefore no funding will be approved for these items. Please note that if such equipment or components are requested nonetheless, doubts may be raised whether it is possible to conduct leading-edge basic research in such an environment (and indeed how it was possible to carry out the preliminary work related to the project in the first place). This may have an impact on the funding decision.

In this context, "equipment" includes scientific instruments, system components, self-constructed devices (generally assembled from smaller pieces of equipment and materials), and other tangible fixed assets as well as intangible assets such as licenses, industrial property rights, and licenses derived from such rights, whose acquisition cost per item exceeds the amount of EUR 1,500.00 (incl. VAT, unless the research institution is entitled to deduct VAT) and where the said equipment is financed primarily (more than 50% of the total costs of the specific item) from FWF funds. A vendor quote from a company (PDF scan) must be uploaded with the application for each piece of equipment whose acquisition cost (including VAT) exceeds EUR 5,000.00. A vendor quote may not be older than 12 months.

For items of equipment which are required specifically for the project and whose acquisition cost (including VAT) is EUR 24,000.00 or higher, applicants must confirm with their signatures on the application form (*affirmation of applicant*) that they have verified that no comparable equipment that could be used or shared is available within a reasonable distance, and that the possibility of (co-)financing by third parties has been explored.

Applicants must also ensure that they are aware of any possible costs that could arise from the use, maintenance, and repairs of the equipment.

The principal investigator is to instruct his/her research institution to order the equipment and effect payment accordingly. In all equipment purchases, the research institution's procurement guidelines are to be observed. Each item of equipment is to be recorded in the institution's inventory and the acquisition costs are to be reimbursed from the respective project budget in accordance with the relevant agreement between the research institution and the FWF.

2.5.4 Material costs

"Materials" encompasses consumables and small pieces of equipment (cost per item is below EUR 1,500.00 incl. VAT).

The calculation of requested funds for project-specific material costs should be justified with reference to the timelines, work plans, and experiment plans. In making the calculation, experience from previous projects should be considered.

2.5.5 Travel costs

Funding may be requested for project-specific travel and accommodation, field work, expeditions, etc. The project description must include a detailed travel plan broken down by project participant. This plan must indicate which persons, for what purpose, when (in which year of the project), for how long and where they will be travelling, and how much this will cost.

When planning travel in connection with a project, researchers should always carefully consider whether travel is absolutely necessary or whether the relevant information can be exchanged virtually. If a project requires travel, transportation by train is preferred to travel by air as a contribution to environmental sustainability. Funding can be requested for any resulting extra costs such as an additional overnight stay. When travelling by air, it is strongly recommended to make a carbon offset contribution⁵, which can be requested as part of the travel expenses or funded through the budget for general project costs. A carbon offset contribution can be requested for up to 15% of the ticket price.

Travel expenses for researchers from other Austrian and foreign research institutions can only be granted in exceptional cases and require detailed justification.

The calculation of travel and accommodation costs should generally be based on the federal regulations governing travel costs (RGV). The current RGV rates for travel abroad can be found in the following [document](#).

For longer stays, a transparent and appropriate budget should be prepared; in general, this budget will be lower than the costs calculated based on RGV rates.

⁵ The amount of a carbon offset contribution for flights can be calculated, for example, using the [CO2 calculator](#) on the website of Climate Austria.

Applicants must not request funding for the presentation of project results at conferences; the costs associated with attending such conferences should be covered by the “general project costs”.

2.5.6 Costs as part of national and international cooperation arrangements

In contrast to national research partners (see [section 1.6](#)), costs arising within the context of a research collaboration with an external research institution are to be borne by that research institution.

Within the context of cooperation arrangements, funds may only be transferred to a cooperation partner (whether or not they are based abroad) if they are clearly limited contracts or services and directly necessary for carrying out the Austrian project. These costs must be substantiated by a vendor quote, and funding for them can be requested under “Other costs”. This does not apply to [cooperation arrangements with scientists or scholars from developing countries](#).

2.5.7 Other costs

- Independent contracts for work and services (costs for work of clearly defined scope and content carried out by individuals, provided that they are justified in terms of research and are economical);
- Costs for the preparation, archiving, open access, and reuse of research data in repositories in accordance with the FWF’s Open Access Policy;
- Costs that cannot be included under personnel, equipment, materials, or travel costs, for example:
 - Coverage of costs for the use of research facilities, e.g., costs for the project-specific use of available equipment (i.e., project-specific “equipment usage times”) or of large research facilities; if the costs exceed EUR 5,000.00 including VAT, vendor quotes must be provided; please upload a PDF scan. Where the costs exceed EUR 10,000.00 not including VAT (over the entire term of the project), each vendor quote must be accompanied by the corresponding calculation basis. This calculation must include information on the nature and scope of the services for which project-specific costs are incurred (according to internal charging procedures, e.g., based on usage days or hours, or based on the number and type of measurements/analyses performed, etc.) and may not contain any infrastructure-related costs like equipment depreciation, supplementary charges for overheads, costs of research premises, etc.;
 - Costs for any laboratory animals necessary for the project;
 - Costs for project-specific work carried out outside the applicant’s research institution (e.g., for analyses carried out elsewhere, interviews, sample collection, etc.); in case the costs exceed EUR 5,000.00 including VAT, vendor quotes must be uploaded;
 - Costs for the disposal of project-specific hazardous waste.

2.5.8 General project costs

For reasons of simplicity, general project costs refer to all those costs that are generally permitted but cannot be requested separately. These include, for example, costs for conference travel, dissemination activities as well as smaller, unforeseen costs necessary for the project. General project costs should not be understood in the sense of overhead costs of the research institution.

General project costs are to be entered in the appropriate field in the *cost breakdown* form and calculated as 5% of the total funding requested. No justification for general costs is needed in the project description.

Up to three years after the completion of the project, applicants can apply for additional funds for publications resulting from projects supported by the FWF as part of its [peer-reviewed publications](#) programme.

2.6 Forms

All required forms must be completed in their entirety. For the application to be legally binding, the FWF requires the cover sheet generated automatically at the end of the submission process, including the original signatures and stamps:

- Affirmation of applicant;
- Declaration of consent by the applicant's research institution;
- Consent of the applicant relating to GDPR
- Affirmation of the national research partner, where applicable;
- Declaration of consent by the research institution of the national research partner, where applicable.

Co-authors form: All persons who have made substantial research-related contributions to the conception and writing of the application should be named as co-authors. A brief description of the nature of each contribution should be included; where there are no co-authors, applicants should state this explicitly on the form.

2.7 Additional attachments

In addition to the project description incl. annexes and the forms, the following attachments must be uploaded, where applicable:

- Cover letter;
- List of reviewers who should be excluded;
- If the Stand-Alone project submitted is the continuation of an FWF-funded project, a report on previous results or a final report and a list of publications resulting from the project must be uploaded in the language of the application (no more than 6 pages);
- For the attachments needed when a rejected application is revised and resubmitted, see [section 2.8](#);

- Vendor quotes for requested pieces of equipment whose acquisition cost (including VAT) is EUR 5,000.00 or higher. (Please provide one quote from one company for each piece of requested equipment. These quotes may be submitted in German).
- Vendor quotes for any relevant items requested under “other costs” if the costs exceed EUR 5,000.00 including VAT (e.g., use of research facilities).

It should be noted that any annexes or attachments in addition to the ones mentioned above will not be considered in further stages of the application process (such as letters of recommendation, “forthcoming” publications etc.).

2.8 Revising a rejected application (“resubmission”)

A resubmission is defined as the revision of a rejected application which – regardless of the programme category – deals with the same or similar research questions. Where an applicant submits an application on the same or very similar research questions yet does not consider it to be a resubmission but an entirely new project, the applicant must submit a separate accompanying letter to the FWF Office explaining how the research questions have in fact changed. For example, changes in research methods alone are not sufficient for a proposal to qualify as a completely new project. In cases of doubt, the decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide.

- An accompanying letter containing an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application must be submitted to the FWF. This overview will not be passed on to the reviewers.
- Response(s) to reviews: the applicant can decide whether the response(s) should be passed on only to the previous reviewer concerned or to all reviewers. These response(s) should address the suggestions and criticism expressed in each review of the previous application and point out the changes made on that basis. Such responses are not necessary in the case of reviews written by persons who are to be excluded from the review process for the resubmitted application. However, such exclusions must be justified and will also be counted toward the list of reviewers (see [section 3](#)) who are to be excluded for the resubmission.

If all the reviewers are to receive the response(s), the applicant must submit a single document containing an overall response. If the response(s) are to be passed on only to the reviewers who were previously involved, the applicant should include a short response to each review in a separate document.

Resubmissions must show changes. If an application has been rejected for the reasons for rejection C3, C4, and C5, these changes need to be substantial (based on the comments in the reviews). If no such changes are made, the FWF’s decision-making bodies will return the application to the applicant without review.

There is no deadline within which a resubmission of a rejected application must be submitted, but any relevant application requirements must be considered. Submission of a resubmission follows the application procedure described in [section 2.2.3](#), meaning that it is

submitted as a new independent application and not as an additional application to the previously rejected application.

3 Processing of and decision on the application

The FWF Office undertakes a formal check of the application. A detailed description of the decision-making process, the criteria for selecting international reviewers, detailed rules concerning conflicts of interest and the composition of juries and boards can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

Information on the average duration of the review process can be found in the [FWF-Dashboard](#). When the review process is completed, the FWF Board considers the reviews and decides whether the proposal should be supported. The applicant will be informed in writing of the FWF's decision.

The number of reviews required for a funding approval depends on the amount of funding requested. For requests of up to EUR 400,000.00, at least two reviews are needed; for each additional EUR 200,000.00, at least one further review is required (e.g., up to EUR 600,000.00, at least 3 reviews, and so on).

Please note that experience has shown that the average processing time increases significantly with an increase in the number of required reviewers.

Requests for changes and returning applications without review

The FWF will not process incomplete applications, those which do not comply with the FWF's regulations or which contain formal errors (in particular, if the maximum length permitted is exceeded), unless and until the applicant has rectified the problems within a reasonable period of time (generally three weeks). If the problems have not been resolved within this period of time, the FWF's decision-making bodies will return these proposals without review. Similarly, applications will not be reviewed if they have been previously rejected by the FWF and resubmitted without appropriate revisions.

All applications that conform with the FWF's regulations will be sent out for review. The reviewers (generally persons working outside of Austria) will be selected by the members of the FWF Board and confirmed by the FWF's decision-making bodies.

Once the review process has begun, no more changes can be made to the application.

The most common reasons why applications are returned without review are (a) that the applicant's track record of publications does not meet the requirements (see [section 1.5](#)) and (b) that the application does not address specific hypotheses or research questions (see [section 2.3.1](#)).

Reasons for rejection

The reasons for rejecting an application will be analysed and assigned one of five categories (C1–C5). The result will be sent to applicants along with the reviews. A detailed description of the categories can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

Resubmissions

If the application is a resubmission of a previously rejected proposal, the FWF will generally contact those reviewers who provided *constructive* criticism on the previous application. Reviewers who gave entirely positive or negative comments will generally not be contacted for a second review. However, please note that all resubmissions are also evaluated by new reviewers.

Proposal bans

Applications that are rejected for reason C5 will be barred for 12 months (from the date of the decision) and cannot be resubmitted during that period.

Applications that have been submitted three times and rejected for reasons C3 or C4 (with the “three times” referring to the original application and two resubmissions) are also barred for 12 months (from the date of decision). Rejections for reasons C1 or C2 do not count towards this total.

It is only ever topics that are temporarily banned according to these rules, and not applicants.

Exclusion of reviewers

As mentioned in [section 2.7](#), an additional document may be uploaded giving a list of up to three reviewers who the applicant believes may have a conflict of interest and whom the applicant therefore does not wish to review the application.

The applicant must give reasons for why they wish to exclude certain reviewers. If the reasons given hold up to scrutiny, the FWF will generally fulfil such requests and will exclude those reviewers from the review process.

A detailed description of the FWF’s policy on conflicts of interest can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#) document.

Please note that the FWF does not wish to receive, nor will it consider a list of possible reviewers from applicants.

4 Compliance with legal requirements and standards of research integrity

Applicants must comply with all legal requirements and safety provisions (e.g. the Federal Disabilities Act) that apply to their Stand-Alone project and obtain all the necessary permits (e.g., from the Ethics Commission, the Commission for Animal Experimentation, the Federal Monuments Authority Austria, or the relevant foreign authorities).

Applicants must also comply with the [Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice](#) of the [Austrian Agency for Research Integrity \(ÖAWI\)](#). If there is reason to believe that an applicant has failed to comply with these standards, the FWF will carry out a plausibility check in accordance with its [procedure](#). Depending on the circumstances, the FWF can arrange for the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI) to carry out an investigation. The FWF reserves the right to suspend, in part or in whole, any procedures related to applications or ongoing projects until this check or investigation has been concluded.

5 Publication of project data and results

The FWF would like to point out that should the project be approved, the FWF will publish on its website a summary of the project in German and English for public relations (PR) purposes – which must be sent to the FWF by the applicant when returning the grant agreement – as well as the amount of funding granted and, on project completion, summaries of the final report of the project. The principal investigator should ensure that these summaries are written in such a way as to safeguard legitimate interests of secrecy for reasons of national defence and patent law, and that trade secrets are appropriately protected. Guidelines for writing PR summaries can be found [here](#).

In addition, the FWF requires a data management plan (DMP) for all approved projects. This should also be sent to the FWF when returning the grant agreement. The template for the DMP can be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

For any kind of publication of project results (e.g., academic publications, research data, conference papers, and media reports), applicants must comply with the guidelines specified in the funding agreement on acknowledging the FWF as the funding institution and the [Open Access Policy](#).

Appendix 1:

Template: information on the research institution and finances

Note: The information on the research institution and the description of project finances must be presented using the following structure and appended to the project description as Annex 2. The costs must be broken down and adequately justified for each point below. The list and justification of the costs requested must be in accordance with the costs indicated in the *cost breakdown* form.

- a) Details on the research institution of the applicant and—if applicable—of national research partners⁶:
 - Existing personnel (not financed by the FWF, usually the principal investigator and research personnel at the research site(s))
 - Existing infrastructure
- b) Information on the funding requested⁷:
 - Explain briefly why the personnel requested is needed for the project (type(s) of requested position(s), job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project);
 - Explain briefly why the non-personnel cost applied for are justified (equipment, materials, travel, and other costs). If funding for equipment is requested, applicants must explain why this does not constitute part of the basic equipment of the given research environment – see also [section 2.5.3](#).

List and justification for

Personnel costs:

Equipment costs:

Material costs:

Travel expenses:

Other costs (including independent contracts for work and services):

⁶ In the case of international programmes (joint projects), information on the research site(s) of the foreign project partner(s)

⁷ In the case of international programmes (joint projects), list and justification of the requested funds of the foreign project part(s)

Appendix 2: Notes and questions for reviewers in the Stand-Alone Projects funding programme⁸

The FWF actively supports equal opportunities and fair treatment for all applicants. The FWF does not put applicants at a disadvantage for non-research-related reasons (such as age, gender, etc.) and therefore asks all reviewers to apply the same standards. For example, when assessing applicants' qualifications, please disregard their actual age, but consider their academic age instead.

Our commitment to equal opportunities also means taking into account breaks or delays in applicants' research careers (e.g., due to parental leave; long-term or chronic illness; disability; caring responsibilities; etc.), which may have led to publication gaps, atypical career paths, or limited international research experience.

Only the ten most important academic publications and the ten most important additional research achievements of the applicant are to be considered when evaluating the application. As a signatory to the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), the FWF also emphasizes that, in assessing research performance, reviewers should refrain from using journal-based metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor.

Please review the present proposal⁹, using the following six assessment criteria:

1) innovation and originality, 2) quality of the proposed research, 3) approach and feasibility, 4) researchers' qualifications, 5) ethics and gender, and 6) overall evaluation. For each of these criteria except 5) we ask you for both written comments and a rating on a scale from "excellent" to "poor". Please be aware, however, that the FWF's funding decision will be based primarily on reviewers' written assessments rather than the ratings assigned.

Please keep in mind that sections 1 and 2 will be forwarded to the applicant in its entirety and in anonymous form.

⁸ Further information can be found on our website: [FWF's corporate policy and mission](#) or [Application Guidelines for Stand-Alone Projects](#).

⁹ The project proposal must meet the FWF's formal requirements. Please bear these in mind when writing your review. (Key formal requirements: 20 pages max. for the project description including figures and tables; 5 pages max. for the list of references; 3 pages max. for each academic CV, including a description of previous research achievements and the ten most important publications. For further details, see [Application Guidelines for Stand-Alone Projects](#)).

Section 1¹⁰

1) Innovation and originality

Is the proposed research innovative? Does it make an original contribution to its field?

2) Quality of the proposed research

Are the research questions formulated clearly? Are they timely, challenging and likely to lead to relevant insights?

3) Approach and feasibility

Is the research design well-conceived, clearly formulated, and suitable for answering the research question(s)? Is there a well-organized work plan? Have the methods been chosen well and does the proposal describe them in sufficient detail?

4) Qualifications of the researchers involved

How well are the researchers qualified to carry out the proposed research? How would you assess the academic qualifications of the applicant, their team and collaboration partners? In evaluating their qualifications, please consider their career stage, taking into account unusual career paths and circumstances that may have slowed down their progress (e.g., parental leave, long-term or chronic illness, disability, caring responsibilities).

5) Ethics, sex and gender

- a) Ethics: Have ethical considerations been addressed satisfactorily?

- b) Sex and gender: Applicants are required to address any relevant sex-specific and/or gender-related elements inherent in their research questions and/or research design. Please assess whether their treatment of these components is adequate.

6) Overall evaluation

What is your overall impression of the proposal? Specifically, what would you consider its key strengths and weaknesses? Please give reasons for your answers, taking as much space as you need.

¹⁰ Additional questions in the case of international programmes: International cooperation arrangement(s) – How well integrated are the project parts in Austria and in the partner country/countries? How would you assess the complementarity of the scientific/scholarly contributions of the researchers in Austria and abroad?

Section 2: Optional recommendations for the applicant(s)

If you are in favour of the project being funded, you may want to add to the formal assessment in section 1 by making further and perhaps more informal comments or suggestions here. However, please note that these remarks, too, may impact on the FWF's funding decision, especially if they amount to substantive criticism of the project.

Section 3: Confidential remarks to the FWF

Please use this space to make any comments that you do not wish to be conveyed to the applicant(s). Feel free to also give us feedback about the evaluation process and your interactions with us.