

# General Principles of the FWF Decision- Making Procedure

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Discovering  
what  
matters.

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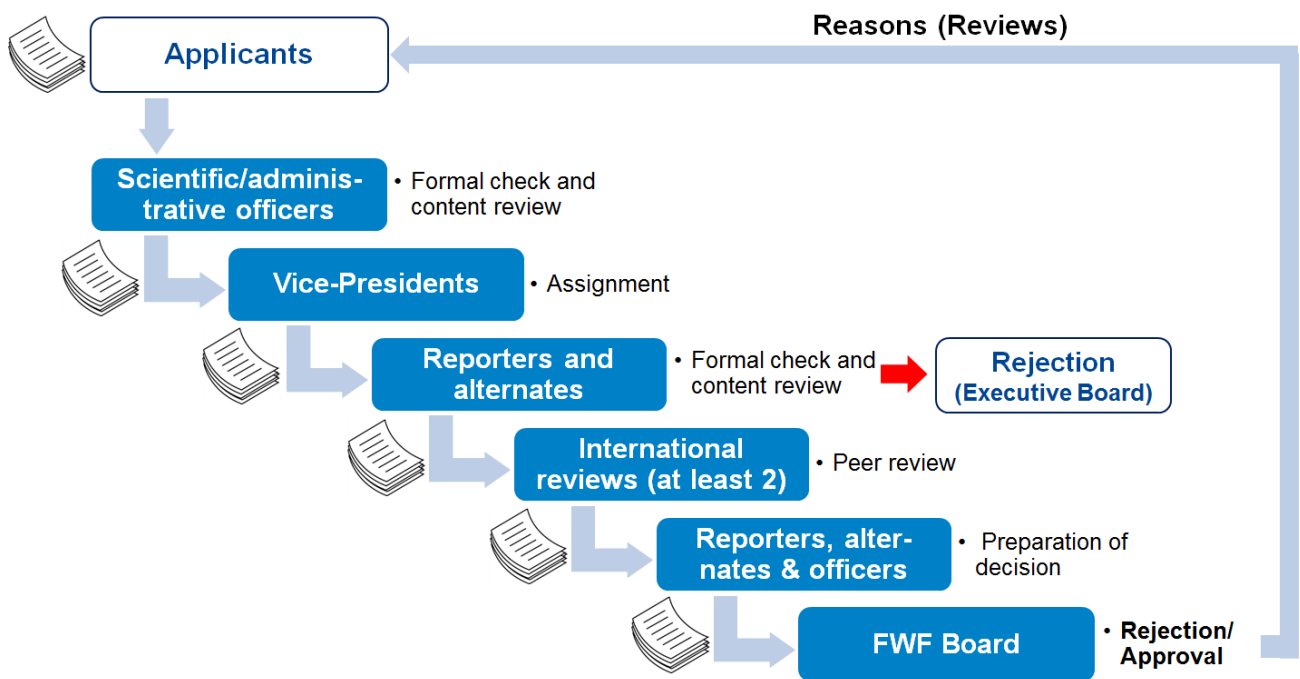
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# 1 General Principles

All applications submitted to the FWF are subjected to a **peer review procedure**. For this procedure, only scholars and scientists working outside Austria are asked to review proposals. These reviews form the basis for all funding decisions, which ensures that the quality of the research funded is on par with international standards.

The FWF treats **all** scientific disciplines equally and has **no quota system** regulating the distribution of funds among the various disciplines.

**Decision process flow chart<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Some exceptions to the review process shown above (multi-stage procedures, international jury, etc.) apply in individual programs (e.g. collaborative programs or the FWF START Award). These are indicated on the FWF website under the respective programs. Especially in the case of international programs, submission, review, and decision-making procedures need to comply with the specific structures and procedures of those programs and may differ from the general principles outlined in this document (see [section 6](#)).

## 1.1 The application process

The application and decision-making procedure is illustrated in the above diagram. Some exceptions to this procedure may apply in individual programs, for example the involvement of a jury. Once an application has been submitted to the FWF online portal [elane](#) (incl. the fully completed cover sheet required for ad personam funding programs), the application is checked for completeness and any formal errors (see [section 1.3](#)) and the applicant receives an acknowledgement of receipt. As a rule, each application is assigned to at least one Scientific Consultant and one alternate. The research area (or research areas for interdisciplinary projects) plays a major role in this assignment.

## 1.2 Conflicts of interest

The FWF keeps a close watch for any possible conflicts of interest on the part of Scientific Consultants, alternates, and FWF employees.

§4b of the Research and Technology Funding Act (*Forschungs- und Technologieförderungs-gesetz*, FTFG) requires all FWF employees and board members to perform their duties conscientiously and in an impartial, unbiased manner. Where conflicts of interest arise, those persons are excluded entirely from participating in the procedure, particularly from voting, pursuant to § 7 of the Austrian General Administrative Procedure Act (*Allgemeines Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz*, AVG). In addition to the direct relationships mentioned in § 7 of the AVG, other important factors may exist that could give rise to doubts about complete impartiality, e.g. when a member of the Scientific Board has a personal connection to the matter under discussion or to the applicant that might jeopardize their impartiality. Even the appearance of potential bias or a conflict of interest must be avoided.

When the Scientific Board discusses applications submitted by individuals (applicants, national cooperation partners, associated research partners), institutions, or working groups to which an individual board member has a specific professional or personal relationship, that board member is not permitted to take part in the deliberations and is required to leave the meeting room for the duration of the relevant discussion.

The following rules apply to **institutional conflicts of interest**:

If an organizational unit has fewer than 900 academic staff members (including professors), employees of this organization are automatically subject to an institutional conflict of interest.

Specifically, this rule applies to the following universities (each in their **entirety**):

- University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna
- University of Applied Arts Vienna
- Mozarteum University Salzburg
- University of Music and Performing Arts Graz
- University of Art and Industrial Design Linz
- Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

There are hardly any organizational units at Austrian universities with the required size of 900 academic staff members; currently only two faculties fulfil this criterium:

- Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna
- Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Graz

In addition to institutional conflicts of interest, the same rules regarding conflicts of interest apply to Scientific Board members as to reviewers (see [section 3](#)).

The member must leave the meeting room while the application is being considered by the Scientific Board. All reviews received are generally made available to all Scientific Board members not subject to a conflict of interest (grounds must be provided for any exceptions to this rule).

### 1.3 Initiation of international review

In close collaboration with the FWF Office, the Scientific Consultants and their alternates assigned to the proposal suggest suitable reviewers from outside of Austria to the FWF Executive Board according to the many-eyes principle. When selecting reviewers, the utmost care is taken to prevent either real or assumed negative or positive conflicts of interest. Applicants have the right to exclude up to three potential reviewers from the review process.

The criteria for the selection of reviewers as well as the rules regarding conflicts of interest and the composition of juries and similar boards are specified in [section 5](#).

The FWF Executive Board decides whether a review procedure is to be initiated and formally appoints reviewers based on the recommendations of the Scientific Consultants and/or alternates. This is an ongoing process, and does not depend on specific meeting dates.

In principle, all applications received are subject to a formal check for completeness and accuracy. Applications are returned without review if:

- They are outside the scope of the FWF's funding activities.
- The applicants obviously do not have either the necessary academic qualifications/research experience (e.g. with regard to the necessary publication requirements in the application guidelines) or the necessary infrastructure to carry out the proposed research.
- The applications cannot be reviewed in their current form because they contain major errors (e.g. exceeding the scope of the application, non-compliance with formatting requirements, missing signatures, missing description of objectives, methodology, degree of novelty or innovation, hypotheses, or research questions) unless these errors are corrected within a reasonable period of time (usually a maximum of 3 weeks; for programs with specific submission deadlines, applicants must correct the errors in their applications within ten working days of being notified of the errors).

Only reviewers are to make any qualitative assessment of scientific or scholarly aspects of the proposal (e.g. innovativeness of the hypothesis(es), relevance of the research topic, etc.).

## 1.4 Number of reviews

The number of reviews required for a proposal to be approved depends on the funding program:

- Min. one review: Book Publications, Digital Publications, and Academic Journals
- Min. two reviews: Principal Investigator Projects (including the Gottfried and Vera Weiss Prize, Herzfelder Foundation projects, netidee SCIENCE, and the ASMET Research Award), International Projects, Clinical Research, Arts-Based Research (PEEK), Erwin Schrödinger, ESPRIT, and Elise Richter (including Elise Richter PEEK)
- Min. three reviews: FWF START Award, Special Research Area pre-proposals, Research Groups (three each for Research Group pre-proposals and Research Group full proposals), #ConnectingMinds, doc.funds and doc.funds.connect, Emerging Fields (second stage), FWF Doctoral Program final reviews
- Min. four reviews: FWF Wittgenstein Award, Clusters of Excellence
- Min. five reviews: Special Research Areas full proposals, continuation applications for Special Research Areas

In addition, the following regulation applies to Principal Investigator Projects and adjacent programs such as the Clinical Research Program: The number of reviews required for funding approval depends on the amount of funding requested. For funding requests of up to €450,000, at least two reviews are needed; for each additional €200,000, at least one further review is required (e.g., up to €650,000 at least three reviews, and so on).

For more detailed information, please see the application guidelines for the respective program.

The number of reviews required may be increased for proposals that cover several fields of research.

Applications can be recommended for rejection on the basis of **fewer reviews than required for the respective funding program** if the review or reviews received already clearly indicate that the application should be rejected. The Scientific Consultant and the Vice-President responsible for the discipline in question must agree to the rejection.

## 1.5 Review structure

A review must consist of a written statement, in which the reviewers are asked to address specific questions with regard to the proposal. Reviewers are also asked to provide an

overall formal assessment<sup>2</sup> (i.e. rating) for each specific question using a six-point scale. The questions for reviewers may vary depending on the program and its objectives and can usually be found in the appendix of the relevant application guidelines, along with the rating scale. Each review normally consists of three sections: Sections one and two will be forwarded to the applicant in their entirety (including the overall ratings). In the third section, reviewers can provide additional, confidential comments to the FWF.

If a review is not sufficiently persuasive, it is deemed unusable and not taken into account in the decision-making procedure. Criteria for defining a review as unusable include a) false assertions, b) contradictory argumentation, c) an exaggerated positive or negative assessment without corresponding arguments, and/or d) bias or a conflict of interest is identified at a later date.

The applicant will be notified of the invalid review after the funding decision has been made, but will not be informed of the reason the review was not used.

## 1.6 Funding Decisions

All applications that have the required number of reviews for a possible approval are brought forward at a meeting of the Scientific Board. The FWF Scientific Board is an elected body that strives for gender balance and diversity in terms of the academic age of its Scientific Consultants in addition to their professional expertise. Five Scientific Board meetings are scheduled per year. In their comments, the Scientific Consultants assigned to each proposal present the key statements of the reviews received. In most cases, decisions are made unanimously and (where necessary) often after a detailed discussion and comparison of the proposals submitted. In the course of this discussion, bonuses may be offered to applicants in selected programs (Principal Investigator Projects, Clinical Research, and some international projects).

**Cases requiring discussion:** Proposals that do not receive a clear vote for approval are designated as cases requiring discussion by the FWF Office. In selected programs (e.g. Principal Investigator Projects, Clinical Research, International Programs), individual Study Groups or the entire board can apply the following bonuses for the weighting of projects of equal academic quality:

- (a) Early-stage applicants (up to 8 years after earning their doctorate)
- (b) Grant-salaried researchers applying for funding for their own position (min. 50%)
- (c) High level of innovation: All reviewers rate the level of innovation as “outstanding” or “excellent” and state the grounds for this rating in the review
- (d) If applications with equally excellent reviews cannot be clearly decided using the above bonuses, the following bonus will be applied: For resubmissions: The previous application was rejected for ground C1 or C2.

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<sup>2</sup> There are no summarized evaluations for Wittgenstein nominations, only a written review.

In programs with the advancement of women as a declared program objective (e.g. ESPRIT), this takes priority over all other applicable bonuses.

After the Scientific Board meeting, decision letters are prepared by the FWF Office and sent to the applicants. The first and second parts of the reviews are included with the decision letters in anonymized form.

For each rejection, the Scientific Board or the responsible decision-making body specifies one of the following standardized grounds for rejection<sup>3</sup> in order to ensure maximum transparency and comparability in all its decisions.

<b>C1</b>	All reviews of your application were positive with regard to the research project itself as well as your research qualifications. However, the reviewers expressed even greater support for other applications. For budget-related reasons, the FWF can currently only approve those applications which receive the most favorable reviews and ratings; this means that unfortunately, your application could not be approved. If you choose to resubmit your application, please place greater emphasis on the strengths of the project in order to improve your chances of approval.
<b>C2</b>	Most of the reviews of your application were positive with regard to the research project itself as well as your research qualifications. However, there were several minor points of criticism in the reviews, and the reviewers expressed greater support for other applications. For budget-related reasons, the FWF can currently only approve those applications which receive the most favorable reviews and ratings; this means that unfortunately, your application could not be approved. If you choose to resubmit your application, please place greater emphasis on the strengths of the project and take the reviewers' suggestions into account in order to improve your chances of approval.
<b>C3</b>	The reviews of your application were largely positive with regard to the research project itself and/or your research qualifications. However, there were a number of points of criticism in the review, meaning that unfortunately, your application cannot be approved in its current form. If you choose to resubmit your application, please focus on the strengths of the project and take the reviewers' comments and suggestions into account visibly and transparently.
<b>C4</b>	The reviews of your application were only partly positive with regard to the research project itself and/or your research qualifications. However, there were numerous points of criticism and suggestions for improvement in the

<sup>3</sup> The exact wording of the grounds for rejection can be adapted to program-specific features where necessary.



	reviews, meaning that the application would have to be substantially revised and possibly re-oriented in order to be eligible for funding. If you choose to resubmit your application, please take the reviewers' comments and suggestions into account visibly and transparently.
<b>C5</b>	The reviews of your application were predominantly very critical. To give you enough time to re-plan and to remedy the weaknesses in your application, the Scientific Board has decided that it cannot be resubmitted for this funding program for a period of 12 months from the date you were notified of the decision.

The FWF Office provides support to FWF's Scientific Consultants, their alternates, and the Vice-Presidents of Research. In all project-related matters, the FWF Office serves as the direct point of contact for applicants.

## 1.7 Resubmissions and follow-up applications

In the case of previously rejected applications which are revised and resubmitted by the applicant as well as follow-up applications (applications to continue research which is thematically related to a previous project), the FWF makes every effort to call upon previous and new reviewers in order to ensure a balance between continuity and new perspectives. For this reason, it is important to clearly mark any changes made in response to explicit suggestions from (previous) reviewers in these applications, so that these changes are visible to new reviewers as well.

## 1.8 Proposal bans

Applications that are rejected for reason C5 will be barred for 12 months (from the date of notification 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 notification of the decision). Rejections for reasons C1 or C2 do not count towards this total.

In general, only topics are barred, not applicants.

## 1.9 Reassessment of funding decisions

Reassessment of funding decisions is possible under the following conditions:

- If a formal error occurred in the decision-making process

and/or

- Facts relevant to the decision become known after the fact and were therefore not taken into account when the original decision was made

Reassessment may be initiated by the FWF itself or by the applicant affected by the decision; in the latter case, the applicant must submit a request for reassessment to the FWF. Reassessment is not possible if the facts relevant to the decision only arose after the decision was made.

The FWF Executive Board will carefully review the grounds for reassessment (formal error and/or new facts) and will revoke the decision if such grounds are given.

The Scientific Board will make a new decision on the application in question after correcting the formal error or taking into account any new facts relevant to the decision.

## 1.10 Whistleblowing and complaints

The FWF is committed to the guidelines of good scientific practice and internationally established ethical standards in the awarding of its funding. The FWF also makes every effort to identify and clarify any possible misconduct as quickly as possible and to take any necessary corrective measures.

Reporting and clarifying misconduct depends on open communication within the FWF. For this reason, the FWF encourages all researchers and other stakeholders to report any suspected misconduct immediately, particularly in the following areas:

- Scientific misconduct associated with the FWF
- Misuse of approved FWF funding
- Corruption/conflicts of interest associated with the FWF

For this purpose, the FWF has established a web-based [whistleblowing system](#) based on the EU Whistleblowing Directive and the national Whistleblower Protection Act (*HinweisgeberInnenschutzgesetz, HSchG*). This tool can be used to quickly and easily report concerns about misconduct and is accessible around the clock and from any location. The anonymity of whistleblowers is fully guaranteed and correctly filed reports offer full protection. If desired, reports can also be submitted in non-anonymized form. Please be aware, however, that deliberate false reports can have consequences under labor law and criminal law.

Please note that the protection offered by the Austrian Whistleblower Protection Act applies only to whistleblowers reporting violations of the law in the categories specified in [§ 3 \(2\) to](#)

[\(4\) of the HSchG](#). Other complaints or concerns can be reported, but do not fall within the scope of protection offered by the HSchG. To ensure your legal protection, we will carefully review each report, regardless of the category selected, and initiate appropriate follow-up action as necessary.

## 2 Reviewer Profiles

The following principles apply to the nomination of reviewers:

- Reviewers must be internationally established experts who are currently active in their respective research fields, and they should possess at least the same level of qualification (in relation to their academic age) as the applicants.
- Direct competitors of the applicant are excluded from acting as reviewers for that proposal.
- The FWF only contacts reviewers who are based outside of Austria. If the reviewer has worked in Austria in the past, they should only be nominated after at least five years of absence from Austria. The respective Vice-President of Research must agree to any exceptions to this principle.
- The reviewers of a given application must not be from the same institution as the applicant.
- Reviewers should generally not be nominated more than twice a year; this applies to all programs.
- When selecting reviewers, every effort should be made to ensure diversity in terms of age, regions, gender, and (where applicable) areas of expertise.
  - a) In terms of academic age, a suitable mix of younger and older reviewers is desirable.
  - b) On average over the course of a year, the percentage of nominated reviewers from Germany/Switzerland should not exceed 15% (max. 25% in the humanities). Similarly, it is also important to avoid an excessive concentration of reviewers from any one region or country.
  - c) A gender balance is strived for. In order to achieve an annual average of at least 30% women, efforts should be made to nominate women at least according to the distribution within the respective discipline. Annual target ranges: HUMSOC: ~40 %; BIOMED: ~35 %; NATTEC: ~25%.
  - d) In addition, hearings for Special Research Areas should include at least two women per panel.
  - e) For disciplines with very small research communities, the FWF attempts to recruit at least one reviewer from a related field or one reviewer more with general expertise.

## 3 Reviewers and Conflicts of Interest

### 3.1 Basic principles

The FWF assumes that, in the interest of good scientific practice, reviewers will also refrain from reviewing applications and notify the FWF in cases which are not explicitly covered by the FWF's rules regarding conflicts of interest. When in doubt or if the situation is not entirely clear, reviewers should always refrain from accepting a request to review an application.

Reviewers are considered positively or negatively biased if:

- They are in a position to benefit professionally, financially, or personally from the approval or rejection of the application (including direct competitive relationships).
- Within the last five years, they have published or collaborated with the applicant or another key project participant,<sup>4</sup> worked with them in profession-specific committees that meet on a frequent and regular basis, or worked with them at the same research institution (see also the conditions under which reviewers are considered free of a conflict of interest in [section 3.2](#)).
- They have fundamental differences of scientific or scholarly opinion with the applicant or other key project participants.<sup>4</sup>
- There are other close professional and/or personal relationships between the reviewers and/or other key project participants<sup>4</sup> that could give the appearance of a conflict of interest to uninvolved third parties

### 3.2 Further provisions

Reviewers will generally **not be considered to have a conflict of interest** under the following conditions:

- In cases of joint publications with more than 20 authors, unless the applicants (including other key project participants<sup>4</sup>) or reviewers are the first/lead or last author of the publication, except in cases where publications list authors in alphabetical order (= authors are listed as equally contributing)

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<sup>4</sup> Key project participants in a project are defined as:

- Individuals who will be using funds from the project (e.g. project-funded staff, national research partners, etc.)
- Individuals whose academic CV was included in the application
- Key program-specific project participants such as ESPRIT mentors, Erwin Schrödinger hosts, or co-authors and contributors for the Book Publications program

COE exceptions:

Due to the large number of individuals and institutions involved, contact with Key Researchers and Associated Researchers does not immediately constitute a conflict of interest for reviewers unless they declare such a conflict themselves. This ensures that reviewers with the necessary expertise can be consulted.

- They have published works in the same edited volumes or proceedings; this does not apply to scholarly tributes (*Festschriften*) in which the applicants (including other key project participants<sup>4</sup>) or reviewers were editors or laureates.
- In cases of joint publications with national or international cooperation partners of the applicants (including other key project participants<sup>4</sup>)

In cases where an application has been revised and is being resubmitted, those reviewers from the previous round who provided substantial and constructive suggestions and criticism should generally be contacted again. Reviewers who gave entirely positive or negative comments will generally not be contacted for a second review. Resubmissions are, however, usually also evaluated by new reviewers.

Applicants are not asked to name reviewers for their applications. If they do so, these suggestions will be disregarded.

A negative list may be added to the application. In this list, applicants may name a maximum of three potential reviewers who are believed to have possible conflicts of interest and who should be excluded from the review process. The FWF Executive Board will generally fulfill such requests. If the application is a resubmission, the negative list may include reviewers of the previous version of the application.

Institutions which handle the review process on behalf of the FWF (such as publishers in the Book Publications and Digital Publications programs) are to consult the FWF when in doubt or if the situation is not entirely clear.

## **4 Dealing with Unconscious Bias**

### **4.1 General information on the FWF website**

The FWF is committed to ensuring a fair and objective evaluation system based solely on research performance and competition. Empirical findings show that women and men are often evaluated differently, even when their performance is the same.

The FWF evaluates applicants' research performance based on the individual funding program, its program objectives, and the specified evaluation criteria. When making its funding decisions, it takes factors such as academic age, the applicants' career stage, and previous academic achievements into consideration. Applicants are given the opportunity to explain any career interruptions or gaps in their academic development.

The FWF provides training on this topic to its staff and the members of its executive bodies to raise awareness of bias in the decision-making process.

## 4.2 Findings on unconscious bias / Guidelines

The most important [findings on unconscious bias](#) are summarized on the FWF website.

[Recommendations](#) for reviewing proposals are intended to help FWF staff, Scientific Board members, and reviewers keep the following principles and implementation steps in mind when processing or evaluating research achievements:

- Reflect on the criteria you apply for evaluating academic excellence: Do researchers of different genders really have the same opportunities to fulfill these criteria?
- Consider the following questions:
  - Are underrepresented candidates subject to different expectations than equally qualified applicants from a majority group?
  - Is research from minority groups undervalued?
  - Is research conducted at smaller research institutions undervalued?
- Avoid phrasing your evaluation in a vague or subjective way without clearly stating your reasons.
- If you want to test if unconscious bias has an impact on your assessments, you may take the [Implicit Association Test](#) developed by Harvard University.
- Make sure to set aside enough time to review proposals.
- Finally, reflect self-critically if there is any unconscious bias which may influence your assessment. If necessary, make a re-assessment and adapt your review accordingly.

## 4.3 Implementation in the letters to reviewers

The FWF refers specifically to these issues in its letters to reviewers.<sup>5</sup> This describes the FWF's objectives in the area of gender equality and equal opportunities and provides reviewers with a link to the [FWF website](#) for more information.

Excerpt from the FWF's letter to reviewers: *"The FWF actively supports equal opportunities and equal treatment in all of its programs. The review of an application must not put applicants at a disadvantage for non-research related reasons such as age, gender, etc. For example, instead of considering the applicant's actual age, the review process should focus on how the length of the individual's research career corresponds to their research achievements to date. Our commitment to equal opportunities also means considering breaks or delays in nominees' research careers (e.g., due to parental leave, long-term or chronic illness, disability, caregiving responsibilities, etc.), which may have led to publication gaps, unorthodox career paths, or limited international research experience. Please also see our information for reviewers on [unconscious bias in the decision-making process](#)."*

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, "Appendix B: Notes and questions for reviewers" in the [Application Guidelines for Principal Investigator Projects](#).

*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 [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#) the FWF also emphasizes that, in assessing research performance, reviewers should refrain from using journal-based metrics such as journal impact factors, Article Influence Scores, or the h-index”*

## 5 Juries and review panels

Juries, review panels, etc. are committees established for specific programs (including the FWF START Award, FWF Wittgenstein Award, Arts-Based Research (PEEK), Elise Richter PEEK, doc.funds, doc.funds.connect, Special Research Areas, 1000 Ideas, Clusters of Excellence, #ConnectingMinds, Emerging Fields), consisting of high-ranking international experts who submit their funding recommendation in the form of a ranking of competing applications to the Scientific Board, based on external reviews and, in some cases, hearings (including the FWF START Award, doc.funds, doc.funds.connect, Special Research Areas, Clusters of Excellence, Emerging Fields). For these bodies, the following applies:

- Jury/review panel members must be internationally renowned, leading scholars/scientists and researchers in their respective fields who also (a) have a broader perspective beyond the boundaries of their field and (b) have suitable experience with similar competitive selection procedures.
- In principle, juries/review panels consist of scholars and scientists from research institutions outside Austria. Persons who have worked in Austria in the past may not become jury members until they have been based outside of Austria for at least five consecutive years.
- At least one third of the members of these bodies should be women, and every effort should be made to ensure a maximum of diversity in terms of regions and institutions.
- When handling applications, jury members are subject to the same rules regarding bias and conflicts of interest as Scientific Board members and reviewers. Any jury member with a conflict of interest is not to participate in the discussion of the application in question and is required to leave the meeting room while the jury deliberates on the case.
- Jury members are generally appointed for a term of three years, after which their term may be extended twice (maximum total: 9 years). At the same time, it is important to make sure that the composition of a jury does not remain the same for more than six years.
- Jury members are informed about the FWF’s objectives in the area of gender mainstreaming and unconscious bias during their briefing.



## **6 International Programs**

Of the funding programs summarized under International Programs, two groups of programs can be differentiated which deviate from the standard procedures. It should be noted that there may also be considerable differences within the individual groups, which is why only the basic characteristics of the procedures are summarized here; detailed information can be found in the specific documents issued for the respective calls for proposals.

### **6.1 Principal Investigator Projects – International**

#### **6.1.1 Bilateral programs subject to parallel review**

These programs are intended to fund bilateral collaborative projects where the two national subprojects are so closely connected that they can only be carried out in conjunction with one another.

The procedures are generally carried out independently of each other at the national level and pursuant to national guidelines.

Funding decisions are made independently by the funding organizations involved. The FWF applies the same quality standards as for national projects. Only applications that are approved by both participating organizations can be funded.

#### **6.1.2 Lead agency programs**

The lead agency procedure allows researchers to submit a joint transnational application to one funding organization (lead agency) according to that agency's national guidelines. The lead agency reviews and decides on the application according to national procedures, the funding organizations of the other participating countries accept the outcome of the procedure, in most cases accept the decision of the lead agency and, in the case of approval, fund the project participant(s) in their countries according to national guidelines.

The FWF's internal procedures differ primarily depending on whether the FWF is the lead agency.

##### **6.1.2.1 FWF is lead agency**

Funding decisions are made in accordance with the FWF's standard procedures and are forwarded to the partner organization(s) involved. In most cases, partner organizations accept the decision of the lead agency and, in the case of approval, fund the national project participants according to national guidelines.



The minimum number of reviews needed (according to the Application Guidelines for FWF Principal Investigator Projects or, in the case of clinical research projects, the Clinical Research program) is based on the amount of the largest national funding request.

The reviews (including confidential sections) are forwarded to the partner organization(s).

### 6.1.2.2 FWF is not lead agency

As the review process is carried out by different partner organizations in accordance with individual national standards, there are differences with regard to the selection and number of reviews, rules on conflicts of interest, etc. The full contents of the reviews are forwarded to the FWF.

The lead agency informs the FWF of the funding decision. The Scientific Board accepts the decision in most cases and, in the event of approval, determines the amount of funding to be awarded to the Austrian project partners.

## 6.2 International – Multilateral Initiatives

Multilateral Initiatives make it possible to fund transnational collaborative projects, often as thematic calls. A collaborative project generally consists of at least three subprojects from different countries. Funding for each subproject is provided at the national level.

### 6.2.1 International – Multilateral Initiatives – Standard

The review procedure is carried out independently by the respective Call Secretariat, which results in differences regarding the selection and number of reviews, rules on conflicts of interest, etc. Reviewers suggested by the partner organization(s) involved can be considered. The review process concludes with a ranked list of the proposals submitted and a funding recommendation from the review panel. The FWF receives the results of the review process (individual reviews as well as the minutes of the review panel).

The funding decision is made by the FWF based on the results of the review process; qualitative comparability with solely national applications is a key criterion in the decision-making process.

### 6.2.2 International Multilateral Initiatives – Common Pot

“Common pot” programs are a special type of multilateral initiative. They are funded from a single, joint funding pot made up of national contributions.

The review procedure is carried out independently by the coordinating organization, which results in differences regarding the selection and number of reviews, rules on conflicts of

interest, etc. Reviewers suggested by the partner organization(s) involved can be considered.

The funding decision is made by a selection committee established by the respective Call Secretariat, which is usually made up of representatives of the participating funding organizations. Funding agreements are concluded with the Call Secretariat.