

## **Doctoral Programmes (DK)**

### **Differences from the General Principles of Decision-making Procedures**

Introductory remarks: the review process DK takes place in two stages, in which the quality of the consortium and of the application are evaluated. The “concept” (first stage) is submitted by the Speaker and subjected to a written review. The “full application” (second stage) is reviewed by means of a hearing with international experts. Applications for a DK must contain a pre-contract between the Speaker and the research institution or university (for a DK) in addition to the written application. Among other things this pre-contract should specify the financial support to be offered by the research institution or university. The review procedure – from submission of concept to decision on the full application – lasts a minimum of 13 months.

### **Handling of the “concept”**

#### **Submission of applications:**

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

Applications for support by means of the programmes listed above must conform to the current “Guidelines for submitting concepts to the FWF”. The FWF guarantees that all applications placed by 2 November (the date of the postmark) will be considered for funding by November of the following year. It is not permitted to make changes to the content of an application once it has been submitted. Nevertheless, with the prior agreement of the FWF office it is possible to send “formal” supporting documents (e.g. original signatures) after the deadline for submission of applications.

Applications will be assigned to one “Reporter in Charge” and two additional Reporters. In some cases more than three members of the Board may be involved with an application.

#### **Initiation of international review:**

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

#### **Minimum number of reviews:**

For a positive decision on a particular application a minimum of 4-6 reviews are required. If it is clear from the reviews that the decision will be negative, a decision may be based on fewer reviews. If an application impinges on several scientific disciplines the number of reviews required may be increased.

**Structure of a review:**

A number of questions are addressed to the referees, relating to the quality of the consortium and of the application (see Annex 1). The referees answer by means of a written statement but do not assign any formal numerical rating.

**Funding decision:**

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

Speakers of concepts that are “approved” as a result of the referees’ reports are invited to submit full applications. They are given information relating to the content of the full application during the subsequent “Proposers’ Day”.

Remark: the standardized justifications for a rejection, which are stated in the “General Principles of the decision-making procedure”, are not applied to this programme.

**Resubmissions:**

Concepts that are not approved may be revised and resubmitted. In the case of a resubmission it is the general practice to contact some of the referees of the rejected version as well as new referees. It is thus important to draw attention to any changes made in response to explicit suggestions from the referees.

## Handling of the “full application”

**Submission of applications:**

Submission of a full application is only possible after approval of a concept. Applications for support by means of the programmes listed above must conform to the current “Guidelines for submitting full applications to the FWF”. Applicants are generally allowed 10-12 weeks to prepare a full application.

Full applications are assigned to the same “Reporter in Charge” and additional Reporters who were responsible for handling the concept.

**Initiation of international review:**

The referees will represent a mixture of referees who reviewed the concept and additional experts. The review will take the form of a hearing in Vienna.

**Minimum number of reviews:**

A minimum of six referees are generally required before the Board may make a positive decision on funding. The referees assess the quality of the application by means of a one-day hearing. If an application impinges on several disciplines, the number of referees may be increased. For each hearing the FWF will attempt to invite at least 2-3 female referees to participate.

**Structure of a review:**

Before a hearing, the referees are requested to provide the FWF with written statements on the full application. These statements will be made available to the FWF representatives but not to the applicants and permit the Reporters handling the application to form a preliminary impression of the application’s quality.

Within the hearing the referees have the opportunity to discuss the application with the applicants and to resolve any open questions and in this way to assess the application and to evaluate the applicants' scientific qualifications as well as the educational structure. The extent of scientific collaboration, in other words the so-called "added value" of the large-scale project, will be taken into consideration and in the case of an application for a DK the quality of the educational structure will also be closely examined.

After the hearing the FWF representatives discuss individual aspects of the project together with the referees in a "closed session". The referees' comments will be noted by the FWF and will be summarized – without attributing particular comments to individual referees – in the form of the hearing's minutes. After the FWF's Board reaches its decision, the minutes will be transmitted to the applicants. In addition, the referees assign numerical ratings to the overall application and to various aspects of it. These ratings are not forwarded to the applicants.

### **Funding decision:**

Funding decisions for these projects are taken in the final Board meeting of each calendar year. The decisions are based on the contents of the minutes of the "closed session" and the numerical ratings assigned by the referees. The FWF Reporters summarize the referees' views, describing the referees' overall opinion as reflected in the minutes of the "closed session".

A positive funding decision on a DK is always subject to a condition: the pre-contract concluded between the Speaker and the university submitted together with the full application must be converted to a valid contract and sent to the FWF before any financial support may be provided.

Remark: the standardized justifications for a rejection, which are stated in the "General Principles of the decision-making procedure", are not applied to this programme.

### **Resubmissions:**

If a full application is rejected, the applicants may generally restart the procedure by submitting a fresh concept. In such cases, the FWF normally contacts referees who were involved with the previous versions as well as involving new referees. It is thus important to draw attention to any changes made in response to explicit suggestions from the referees.

## **Example of questions addressed to referees in relation to an application for a DK**

### **Guidelines for Reviewers of a DK draft proposal Objectives of the preliminary review process**

All those wishing to apply for a Doctoral Program (DK) must provide a draft proposal prior to submitting a comprehensive application proposal (this final proposal will be reviewed in the framework of a hearing). The draft is sent to independent experts who are asked to critically review the specific area of research and basic structural features of the planned DK.

The preliminary consideration of the draft DK proposal by the FWF is designed to enable us to assess:

- whether the planned DK is feasible
- whether the participating scientists are sufficiently qualified (in an international context) to meet the high quality standards required to conduct a DK
- whether the proposed program itself requires modification

### **Based on the result of this preliminary evaluation, the board of the FWF decides**

- whether a comprehensive application proposal should be prepared on the basis of the submitted draft
- whether the draft should be revised and modified before a definite proposal is prepared (a revised draft will be sent to reviewers again)
- whether the DK initiative should be cancelled

**Evaluation form of a full proposal for Doctoral Program (DK)  
in the course of the closed session**

**Review of the Doctoral Program (DK)**

**WXXXX-YYY**

The evaluation scale ranges from "excellent" (100-90 points), to "very good" (85-75 points), to "average" (70-55 points), to "below average" (50-35 points), to "poor" (30-10 points)

Please assign a rating between 0 and 100 according to the evaluation scale

**Research theme**

Scientific goals and topicality	<input type="text"/>
Innovative potential of the theoretical and methodological approaches	<input type="text"/>
Ability to compete at an international level	<input type="text"/>
Internal structure	<input type="text"/>

**Scientific basis**

Scientific reputation and potential of the researchers involved	<input type="text"/>
Scientific quality and international standing of these researchers' current research	<input type="text"/>

Added value (to the research that would result from establishment of a Doctoral Programme)	<input type="text"/>
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**Training**

Training aims (intended qualification profiles)	<input type="text"/>
Training programme	<input type="text"/>
Scientific supervision	<input type="text"/>
Additional training programme (language courses, scientific writing etc.)	<input type="text"/>
International contacts and collaborations	<input type="text"/>

Proposed selection procedures	<input type="text"/>
Internal monitoring	<input type="text"/>
Available infrastructure (equipment)	<input type="text"/>
University measures to incorporate the Doctoral Programme	<input type="text"/>

**Summary Evaluation**

Excellent		Very Good			Good				Average					Poor				
100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10