

## Review Process and Working Procedures of the FWF

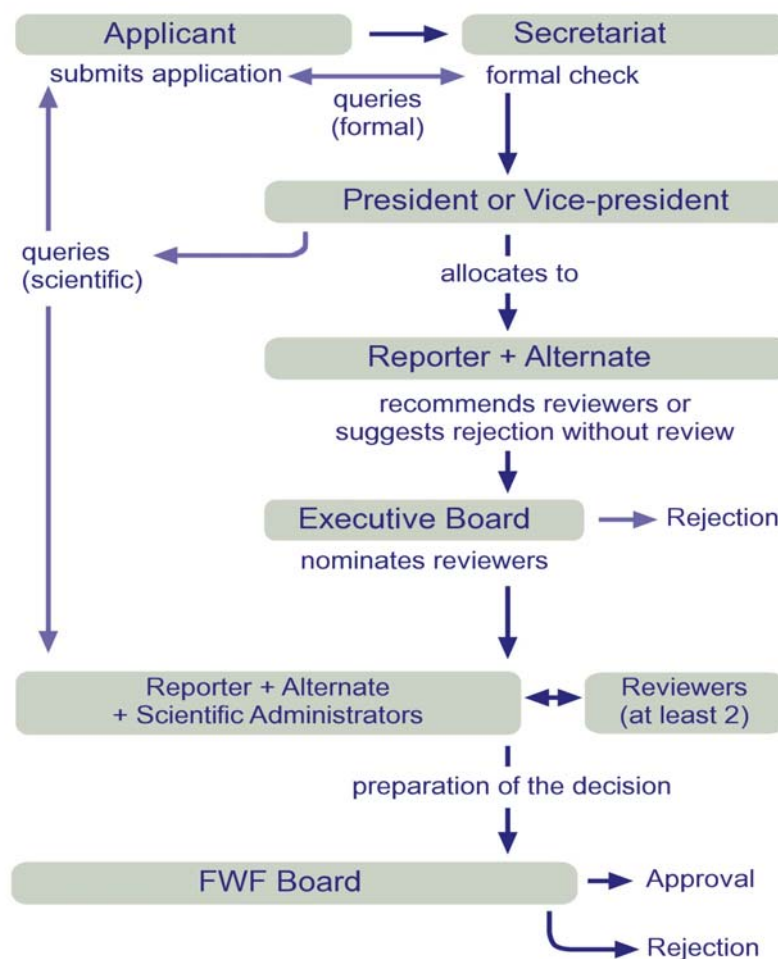
### Lise Meitner Program for Scientists from abroad

#### The selection process

All applications submitted to the FWF are subjected to a peer review process in which only scientists working outside Austria are requested to review proposals. Their reviews represent the basis for all decisions on funding. Both the quality and the international relevance of the research are thus guaranteed.

The FWF handles applications in the same way **regardless of their subject area**. There is no quota system and funding is distributed between different scientific disciplines based only on the scientific quality of the applications.

#### Flow diagram



## 1. Submission

Applications should conform to the "Lise Meitner-Application guidelines" included with the FWF forms.

Following receipt of an application, the FWF Secretariat checks to ensure that it is complete and that all formal requirements are met. The application is then entered into the FWF's computer system and the applicant is sent a letter acknowledging receipt. The relevant Departmental President allocates the application to a particular Reporter and Alternate. Allocation is based primarily on scientific area but particular attention is paid to ensure that the chosen Reporter and Alternate are absolutely impartial. If an outside observer could think that a certain Reporter or Alternate may not be completely impartial, this Reporter would not be involved in any way with the application. In the case of applications that relate to more than one scientific discipline, one or more Alternates assists with their handling.

## 2. Initiation of international review

In close collaboration, the Reporters and Alternates propose appropriate referees to the Executive Board. As a general rule, scientists working within Austria are not considered as potential referees. Applicants may request **that up to three persons be excluded** from the review process (because of competition or of a difference in scientific opinion).

The Executive Board of the FWF takes decisions on initiation of the review procedure. Reviewers are nominated based on the proposals from the Reporters and/or Alternates. The Executive Board is not tied to meeting dates and its decisions are taken continually. In selecting referees attention is paid to ensure that there are neither negative nor positive conflicts of interest.

If the Executive Board determines that a particular application does not meet the FWF's formal criteria it may reject the application without review. Such decisions are taken following examination by the responsible Reporter and Alternate.

## 3. The review procedure

In general, two reviews are necessary for a decision to be taken. For applications that relate to more than one scientific discipline a larger number may be needed.

The questions asked of the referees may be found on page 4.

A review is comprised of a form, on which a referee ranks an application on a 100-point scale and accords ratings to various aspects (notes 1 to 5), and a written report. Referees are requested to divide their reports into two sections, one that can be transmitted in full to the applicant, and, if desired, one with confidential remarks to the FWF.

If the content of the text is insufficient the review is not taken into consideration. In addition, referees are requested to declare any possible conflict of interest. In such cases reviews (if they are even written) may also be disregarded. If the review includes important questions, the applicant is given the opportunity to respond to them during the review procedure. Particular questions and criticisms are transmitted anonymously to the applicants and the answers forwarded to the referees concerned before the final evaluation is made.

## 4. The decision

The average length of time between receipt of an application by the FWF and the decision by the FWF's Board is 3-4 months. As soon as enough sufficiently detailed reviews are available the subsequent Board meeting can decide whether and to what extent to support the proposal. The Board meets six times per year.

The Reporter responsible for the application presents it to the Board, together with a summary of the reviews received and taking into account any comments of the Alternate(s). If the application comes from a person or an institution or group with which individual members of the Board have a close relationship, these Board members leave the room before the application is presented and take no part in the ensuing discussions. Decisions are often taken only following extensive discussion and comparison between different applications. Most decisions are unanimous.

Following the Board Meeting, the FWF Secretariat will communicate the decisions to the applicants, together with (anonymous) reviews or excerpts therefrom.

The Reporters, Alternates and Departmental Presidents are supported in their work by the FWF Secretariat, which is the direct contact point for applicants in all matters relating to projects.

## **5. Applications for additional support**

Requests for extensions of up to three months are decided by the FWF Board without external review. Requests for additional support (extensions of between four and twelve months) are sent to the initial referees with the request for a written review.

## **Questions to the reviewer's**

### **1. Scientific quality of the project**

- Has the applicant presented a work programme that is worthy of funding from a scientific point of view?
- What position does the present research proposal as a whole have in the current framework of international and - as far you can tell - especially Austrian research?
- Are the project goals clearly formulated and is the methodology appropriate (incl. planned dissemination strategy) and - as far as can be deduced from the application - sufficient to achieve these goals?
- Is the proposed time schedule for realization of the project justified?

### **2. Scientific quality of the scientists involved**

#### **Scientific qualifications of the applicant**

- How would you evaluate the scientific career and the qualifications of the applicant? In particular should she/he be able to carry out the proposed research project successfully and contribute to the scientific work of the Austrian host organization?

#### **Scientific qualifications of the co-applicant / research institution**

- From an international perspective, how good are the scientific qualifications and potential of the co-applicant?
- How would you assess the quality (the international scientific reputation) of the Austrian research institution where the proposed research would be performed?
- Would the proposed research program be expected to provide a stimulus to the scientific research community inside Austria

### **3. Suggestions**

- What could (should) be done to increase the project's chance of success?

## **Section II (confidential remarks to the FWF)**

### **4. Concluding recommendation on funding or rejection of the proposal; and any other comments**