

In accordance with its Funding Guidelines
(as amended), the FWF has issued the following
Application Guidelines for the program

Emerging Fields

Effective as of January 1, 2025

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Please note: Explanations of the terms used in the Application Guidelines can be found in the [Definition of Terms](#) (PROFI mode).

1 General Information

1.1 Program objective

The Emerging Fields (EF) program is aimed at consortia of outstanding researchers who are prepared to do high-risk, pioneering work in basic research and to courageously depart from established approaches. The focus is on research projects that have the potential to generate groundbreaking findings. The chosen approaches can vary widely, allowing researchers to radically question fundamental elements of traditional models or approaches in their field, combine theories and methods from different disciplines in completely new ways, and/or apply innovative technologies to identify unknown problems or look at existing problems from a completely new perspective. The risk inherent in such projects is also their greatest strength: Researchers' ideas must have the potential to open up a new field of research, transform an existing field of research, and/or bring about a paradigm shift within or between disciplines. Only by taking such risks can the disruptive innovations emerge that truly advance scientific research.

The program is particularly open to interdisciplinary consortia, researchers involved in arts-based research who apply aesthetic and artistic methods, and transdisciplinary approaches that involve non-academic participants from outside the scientific community.

A consortium of three to seven excellent researchers (including the coordinator) is responsible for an Emerging Fields project at one or more Austrian research institutions, with the involvement of other project staff and, where appropriate, national or international cooperation partners and practitioners.

Clinical research projects can be co-financed as long as the co-finance agreement is defined in an appropriate statement. Co-financiers are not permitted to appear as sponsors in accordance with [ICH-GCP](#) guidelines. All rights to data and intellectual property remain with the researchers, subject to legal and contractual regulations.

Basic research proposals submitted to the Emerging Fields program are dedicated to the expansion and consolidation of fundamental knowledge or the development and appreciation of the arts. This means that these research proposals are intended to generate new knowledge and are not profit-oriented.

1.2 Submission

All proposals must be submitted online using the [elane](#) digital application portal. The deadline for submission is **March 31, 2025 (2:00 p.m. local time Vienna)**. Project funding is administered through the research institutions ([PROFI](#)); this means the application must be approved for submission by both the coordinator of the consortium and the respective

research institution (= lead research institution) before this deadline.¹ All forms required for the application must be completed online; other required documents such as the project description, including annexes and any additional documents, must be uploaded in full before the application can be approved for submission by the research institution. Applications submitted after the deadline will be returned without review, regardless of the circumstances. For additional information, please see the [elane user manual](#). After submission, Emerging Fields applications are subjected to a three-stage review process (see [section 3.3](#)).

1.2.1 Who is eligible to apply?

All Austrian **research institutions** are eligible to apply.² The intended project must be carried out in Austria or under the auspices of the applying Austrian research institution (= lead research institution). In addition to the lead research institution, a maximum of six other Austrian research institutions can be involved as partner research institutions. Each of the partner research institutions must be represented by at least one consortium member.

An Emerging Fields application is submitted by a consortium consisting of at least three to a maximum of seven outstanding researchers. In the case of approval, consortium members must be employed to an extent of at least 50% at the respective lead or partner research institutions. One consortium member takes on the role of coordinator and is employed at the lead research institution.

If not employed or only employed part-time at the start of the project, the coordinator and all other members of the consortium may be hired on or increased to 100% employment in their current position (see [section 2.3.1.1](#)).

No more than approximately 2/3 of the total number of consortium members may be men.³

1.2.2 Can multiple applications be submitted simultaneously?

There is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted by a research institution.

The following applies to both the proposal phase and the implementation phase of the project:

- Each consortium member (except the coordinator) may only participate in a maximum of two Emerging Fields projects.

¹ Approval for submission by the research institution may be waived by the research institution if it has authorized the coordinator to approve it themselves.

² Research institutions must be [registered](#) in the FWF's research institution portal.

³ The limits are set as follows: no more than five men out of seven consortium members, or four out of six, three out of five, two out of four, and two out of three consortium members. Grounds for any deviations from these ratios must be provided in a written statement (in English). In convincingly justified exceptional cases, project teams exceeding these ratios may be approved after consultation with the international jury.

- A researcher may apply for the position of coordinator or serve as coordinator in no more than one collaborative program (Clusters of Excellence, Emerging Fields, Special Research Areas, Research Groups, Young Independent Research Group, #ConnectingMinds, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect).
- Other consortium members may apply for the position of coordinator or act as principal investigator in *one* additional collaborative program.

This does not apply to programs in the excellent=austria initiative. The following provisions apply to these programs: Members of the Board of Directors (BOD) of an ongoing or pending Cluster of Excellence cannot act as coordinator of an ongoing or pending Emerging Fields project. The coordinator of an ongoing or pending Emerging Fields project also cannot act as a member of the Board of Directors (including the Director of Research) of an ongoing or pending Cluster of Excellence.

1.3 Who is eligible to apply?

1.3.1 General requirements

The publication records of all consortium members over the last five years must be internationally visible and commensurate with the expected career path in their field. The following criteria apply for the assessment of an applicant's publication record and initiation of the review process:

- **Quality assurance:** The primary publications for evaluating the publication record are those that have been subjected to a quality assurance procedure in line with high international standards (peer review or an equivalent procedure; peer review is expected in the natural and life sciences). Journals must usually be listed in Web of Science, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). For journals not listed in those databases, or for monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, or other publication types, the consortium member must provide a link to the publisher's website which contains a description of the applicable quality assurance procedure. Should no such description be available, it is the consortium member's responsibility to provide evidence that the publication has been subject to a quality assurance procedure in accordance with the standards of the field.

For proposals dealing with arts-based research, consortium members who are active in the field of arts-based research must have excellent qualifications according to international standards and must have a connection to the development of the arts. This qualification is to be documented based on artistic, scholarly, and/or arts-based achievements of the last five years commensurate with the consortium member's career path and which demonstrate their international visibility.

- **International visibility:** The majority of the consortium members' publications/artistic works 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 publications must be commensurate with the researcher's expectable career path and the respective discipline. Each consortium member must have published at least two quality-assured and internationally visible publications with a substantial and independent contribution on the part of the consortium member. At least one publication with first, last, or corresponding authorship is required, with the exception of publications in journals (or disciplines) that rank authors alphabetically. If any such publications are included in the required document *PI_publication.pdf* (see [section 2.2.4](#)), the individual consortium members' contribution must be specified.

If there is any uncertainty about general application requirements or about accounting for career interruptions (see [section 1.3.3](#) and [1.3.4](#)), the FWF recommends that consortium members contact the FWF Office or the [FWF Equal Opportunities and Diversity in Research Funding unit](#) in good time before submitting their application to confirm that all requirements are met and that any career interruptions can be accounted for. In cases of doubt, the appropriate decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide on applicants' eligibility.

1.3.2 Equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion

The [FWF Strategy for Gender Equality and Diversity of Researchers](#) applies. This means that breaks or delays in consortium members' research careers that have led to publication gaps, unorthodox career paths, or limited international research experience can be taken into consideration. For further details on accounting for career breaks, please refer to the [information sheet on career interruptions](#).

1.3.3 Consideration of career breaks

The FWF will take justified, documentable career breaks or delays (e.g., due to pregnancy, childcare,⁴ caregiving obligations,⁵ military or civilian service, flight, or asylum) into consideration when assessing eligibility to apply.

1.3.4 Inclusion of the disabled and chronically ill

The FWF will also take any exceptions to and interruptions of typical career paths due to disability and/or long-term or chronic illness into consideration when determining whether an applicant meets the application requirements.

⁴ Childcare includes parental leave periods, if applicable.

⁵ Immediate family members and/or persons living in the same household: Spouses, registered partners, parents, children, adopted, step, and foster children, siblings, parents-in-law, and children-in-law.

1.3.5 Data protection notice

When assessing eligibility, all personal data provided to the FWF by a consortium member on a voluntary basis that relates to the information provided in [sections 1.3.3](#) and [1.3.4](#) shall be taken into consideration exclusively to their benefit (to compensate for disadvantages). Please complete the required [form](#) and give your explicit consent to data processing on the last page. If you wish to submit further supporting documents in addition to those listed in the form, please submit them directly to the FWF Office. These will not be visible to your research institution. All information provided in this regard is used solely to check the application requirements and is not made available to reviewers.

Relevant information, without sensitive or personal data, can be included in an individual's academic CV, making it available to the reviewers. A general explanation, including the duration of the interruption or delay, is sufficient.

1.4 What types of funding can be requested?

Project-specific costs are eligible for funding. These include personnel and non-personnel costs that are needed to carry out the project (between €3 million and €7 million for five years, including 10% general project costs) and that are not included in the infrastructure provided by the research institutions. The FWF does not finance the infrastructure or basic equipment of research institutions.

For information on applying for personnel costs for consortium members' salaries, please see section [2.3.1.1](#).

Please note that exaggerated cost projections may be grounds for rejection, even if a proposal is otherwise excellent.

Funding is administered only through the lead and partner research institutions. Any third parties, such as the organizations of non-academic participants or freelance artists, must charge for the services they provide through service contracts or independent contractor agreements concluded with the lead or partner research institutions.

The continuation of the project is decided in an interim review after three years, and the project can be adapted to any changes in the research environment if necessary.

Multiple funding is not permitted (see [FWF Funding Guidelines](#)).

2 Application

2.1 Sections of the application

A complete application must include the following sections:

2.1.1 Academic abstract

The academic abstract must be written in English, may not exceed 3,000 characters (including spaces, no formulas or special characters) and will be used to inform potential reviewers about the project. The abstract must use the English headings provided below and be entered into the designated form on elane.

- Wider research context / theoretical framework
- Pioneering aspects of the research and transformative potential
- Hypotheses / research questions / objectives
- Approach / methods
- Primary researchers involved

Where alternatives are indicated between slashes, please select the alternative that applies to your project.

2.1.2 Synopsis

The four-page synopsis describes the transformative idea behind the research proposal. The first review stage is based solely on this synopsis: An international, multidisciplinary jury determines whether the proposal has the potential to open up a new field of research, transform an existing field of research, and/or bring about a paradigm shift within or between disciplines. There is no prescribed structure for the synopsis. When writing a synopsis, please refer to the review criteria (see [Appendix B](#)), including the transformation potential of the project and the definition of relevant key terms such as “emergent” or “field” as a frame of reference for the research project. In particular, please describe the expertise available in the consortium and explain why the composition of the consortium is suitable for the implementation of the transformative research project. Applications that do not fulfil these criteria or fulfil them only in part will already be rejected in this first review stage. Proposals that meet the criteria will be subjected to a written review process by international peer reviewers in the second review stage (see [section 3.3](#) and [Appendix C](#)).

The synopsis must be uploaded as a separate file entitled *Synopsis.pdf* and will be forwarded to the jury *without* any other application documents (e.g. abstract, project description with annexes).

2.1.3 Project description

Project descriptions are limited to 30 consecutively numbered pages, including the table of contents (required), and where applicable, a list of abbreviations, headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.

There is no prescribed structure for the project description. International reviewers will evaluate the application in writing using the questions provided for the reviewers (see [Appendix C](#)).

The project description must also include Annexes 1–3 and Annex 4 if applicable, on additional pages:

- Annex 1: List of literature cited in the application (*References*) on no more than 5 pages
- Annex 2: Details of the lead research institution and any partner research institutions and a plausible justification of the funding requested
- Annex 3: Academic or arts-based research CVs and description of previous research achievements for all consortium members involved in the application (no more than 3 pages per person)
- Annex 4 (optional): Collaboration letters from national and international cooperation partners (max. 1 page per letter)

The entire project description, including these annexes, must be uploaded as one file entitled *Proposal.pdf*. In the second review stage, the FWF sends this document together with the abstract and the synopsis to the reviewers (see [section 3.3](#)).

2.1.4 Additional documents

- Required forms:
 - Two publications written by each consortium member must be named, documenting fulfillment of the general application requirements (publication record, see [section 1.3.1](#)) – for internal FWF use only
 - Publication lists for internal FWF use to assess eligibility to apply and to check for conflicts of interest with potential reviewers (see [section 2.2.4](#))
- Where applicable:
 - Total costs: If more than one research institution is involved in the project, the requested funding must be broken down by lead and partner research institution(s) (see [Total_costs.xlsx](#)).
 - Results or final project report: If the project submitted is the continuation of an FWF-funded project (follow-up application), a report on previous results or a final project

report and a list of publications resulting from the project must be uploaded in the language of the application (no more than 6 pages).

- Additional documents in the case of resubmission: If the application is a revised version of a previously rejected application (see [section 3.4](#)), a response to the reviews and an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application must be uploaded (*Overview_revision*).
- Cover letter accompanying the application (optional)
- List of up to 3 researchers (optional) – including, if applicable, reviewers of a rejected proposal – who are to be excluded from the review process (see [section 3.2](#)), with a brief justification

Any additional documents (e.g., recommendations for potential reviewers, letters of recommendation, forthcoming publications) will not be considered in further stages of the application process.

2.1.5 Forms to be completed

- Required forms: *Research site allocation*, *Contact*, *Application* (to be completed by the coordinator), *Program-specific data* (to be completed by the coordinator and all consortium members; if multiple research institutions are involved, the percentual distribution of funding per research institution must be entered here), *Cost breakdown*, *Academic abstract*, and *Co-authors*
- Where applicable: *Other cooperation*

2.2 Application content and format

2.2.1 Application language

To allow applications to be reviewed by international experts, **all** applications must be submitted in English.

2.2.2 Scope and formatting requirements of the synopsis and project description

The synopsis may not exceed 4 pages and the project description may not exceed 30 pages. The project description must contain a table of contents with page references. Optional elements, such as a list of abbreviations, figures, figure legends, tables, footnotes, etc., must also be included in the 30-page limit.

The continuous text in the synopsis and the project description, Annexes 1–3, the publication lists, and the additional documents specified in [section 2.1.4](#) where applicable, must be written, without exception, in 11 pt. font with 1.5 line (15–20 pt.) spacing and at least 2 cm margins. A standard, easily legible font must be used for the body text. The formatting requirements (font type and size, line spacing, and margins) of the project description also apply for the additional documents, except for documents not prepared by the consortium members, such as collaboration letters.

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). Consortium members are free to choose the citation conventions or style guide they prefer, but they must apply them consistently throughout the application. If available, a [DOI address](#) or another [persistent identifier](#) should be used for the literature cited.

2.2.3 Annexes to the project description

Annexes are not included in the page limit for the project description. They must be attached to the project description in the *Proposal.pdf* file in the specified order.

Annex 1: List of literature cited in the application (*References*) on no more than 5 pages

Annex 2: Financial aspects

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

- Information on the lead research institution and of partner research institution(s) where applicable
 - Existing project participants (not financed by FWF project funds) (usually the consortium members and project staff at the research institutions)
 - Available infrastructure
- Information on the funding requested
 - Explanation of why the personnel requested is needed (type(s) of requested position(s), job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project)
 - Concise justifications for non-personnel costs (equipment, materials, travel expenses, 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 2.3.2](#)).

Annex 3: CVs and description of previous research achievements

The academic (arts-based research) CVs and the research achievements of the consortium members must be described on no more than 3 pages per person. Please note that pursuant to the [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#), journal-based metrics such as journal impact factors, Article Influence Scores, or the h-index may not be included in academic CVs.

Academic CVs must be structured as follows:

- *Personal details*: Personal data (name, researcher unique identifiers such as ORCID, research ID, etc., no photos), address of research institution, and relevant websites; please also provide a publicly accessible link to a list of all the researcher's publications.
- *Education*: List of academic milestones
- *Position(s)*: List of academically relevant positions (with the extent of employment in the case of part-time employment)
- *Career breaks* (if any): List of career breaks or delays (see also [section 1.3.3](#))
- *Net research experience* (optional): The length of time (in years and months) that has actually been used in net total for research – calculated in such a way as to be equivalent to full-time employment – and broken down into the time before and after completion of the applicant's doctoral degree. This is intended to make it easier for the reviewers to assess the researcher's qualifications in terms of academic age.
- *Research interests*: Description of the main areas of research and the most important research results achieved to date
- *Academic publications and/or (arts-based) research publications and/or works*: List of no more than 10 of the most important published or accepted publications and/or works (journal articles, monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, proceedings, concerts, exhibitions, installations, performances, artworks, etc.); for each publication, either a [DOI address](#) or another [persistent identifier](#) should be indicated, if available.
- *Additional (arts-based) research achievements*: List of a maximum of ten of the most important (arts-based) research achievements outside of academic publications. Please present each research achievement individually (e.g., one project = one research achievement, two projects = two research achievements, etc.). Examples of such research achievements include freely accessible research data including software and codes, awards, contributions to conferences, keynote lectures, significant research projects, peer review activities, promotion of junior researchers, exhibitions, interactions with society (including citizen science or transdisciplinary activities), science communication, knowledge transfer, licenses, or patents. If available, a persistent identifier or link to the respective research achievement must be provided.

Annex 4 (optional): Collaboration letters

Collaboration letters (each no more than 1 page) from national and international cooperation partners who are named in the project description as being essential for the implementation of the project and whose role is plausibly described

2.2.4 Publication output

The following two separate uploads are required:

- *PI_publication.pdf*: Two publications written by each consortium member must be named, documenting fulfillment of the general application requirements (see template [PI_publication](#)). The FWF will determine eligibility to apply based on these publications.
- *Publication_lists.pdf*: List of all academic publications published in the last 5 years⁶ (categorized into “quality-assured publications” and “other publications”) for all consortium members and postdocs who are to be funded by the project, in *one* PDF document; this publication list helps the FWF to determine if there are any potential conflicts of interest with reviewers. It will not be forwarded to the reviewers.

2.2.5 Total costs

For details on the funds that can be requested, please see [section 2.3](#). If more than one research institution is involved in the project, the requested funding must be broken down by lead and partner research institutions (see [Total_costs.xlsx](#)). The total amount must be the same as provided in the elane *Cost breakdown* form and the distribution of the funding must match the percentages given in the elane *Program-specific data* forms.

2.3 Eligible project-specific costs

When requesting funding, the regulations of the respective research institution and the FWF guidelines apply. The requested funds must be summarized in the elane *Cost breakdown* form.

If a research institution for which funds are requested is entitled to deduct value-added tax (VAT), the funds should be applied for without value-added tax (net). This applies to the lead research institution and, if applicable, to any partner research institutions.

VAT is an eligible expense only if the research institution(s) is/are not entitled to deduct it and it is demonstrably and finally borne by the research institution(s). Recoverable VAT is ineligible for funding, even if it is not reclaimed or recovered by the funding recipient.

⁶ 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.” citation can be used.

Funding may only be requested for the cost categories specified below.

2.3.1 Personnel costs

Funding may only be requested for staff needed in addition to existing personnel resources for the realization of the project and only to the extent required for the project.

Full- or part-time employment contracts (*Dienstverträge*, DV) and contracts for marginal employment (*geringfügige Beschäftigung*, GB) are available for project staff. The [FWF's standard personnel costs](#) apply. These include a fixed percentual increase set by the FWF for subsequent years to compensate for wage increases.

Employment contracts for doctoral students may not exceed 75% employment (up to 30 hours per week). A part-time (50%) employment contract of 20 hours/week for student employees may be requested for researchers who have not yet completed a graduate degree program in the relevant subject area.

One administrative support position can be included per Emerging Field. Please apply for BMA-level⁷ funding from the FWF's standard personnel costs for these positions.

Researchers from international research institutions who are working on the project for a limited period of time are entitled to the postdoc-level salary of the FWF's standard personnel costs. Researchers must be on leave from their home institution abroad for the duration of their stay at the Austrian research institution. Any overpayments must be paid from the 10% general project costs.

2.3.1.1 Grant-salaried positions

The FWF understands "grant-salaried" to mean that the consortium members' salary is financed by the funds of the research project.

Applying for funding (including partial funding) of one's own position is possible for every consortium member, regardless of whether they are in permanent or long-term employment at the time of application. A senior postdoc-level salary⁸ may be requested for consortium members' own position (pro-rated accordingly in the case of partial funding).

Women consortium members whose own position is funded to the extent of at least 50% have the additional option of applying for up to €2,000 per year in the category of "Other costs" for personal coaching and further training measures that directly contribute to their career development. Coaching is understood to mean person-centered counselling and support processes in a professional context. Continuing education activities eligible for

⁷ *Biomedical analyst (BMA)* is to be understood here as a reference value, and not as the specific job profile.

⁸ The senior postdoc rate can only be requested to fund the consortium member's own position; the postdoc salary rate applies for project staff members at the postdoc level.

funding include courses on scientific – in particular, subject-specific – skills (e.g., courses on methodological skills) and personnel development measures such as those offered at some research institutions (e.g., in teaching, academic writing, writing funding applications, especially in English, personnel management and project management, conflict- and problem-solving skills, academic organization, and vocational training and other seminars directly related to career development, including programs for the advancement of women).

At the start of the project, each consortium member must be employed to an extent of at least 50% at the lead or partner research institution (if applicable, financed by the FWF as an own position).

2.3.2 Equipment costs

Funding for equipment may only be requested if it is specifically required for the project and if it is not part of the existing infrastructure of the participating research institution(s).

“Infrastructure” is defined to include all equipment (and components thereof) that a modern research institution needs to conduct basic research in the relevant discipline at an internationally competitive level. This means that equipment such as computers, laptops, etc. are considered part of the standard infrastructure and no funding will be approved for these items.

Equipment eligible for funding includes:

- Scientific instruments
- System components
- Self-constructed devices (generally assembled from smaller pieces of equipment and materials)
- Other durable goods
- Intangible assets such as concessions, industrial property rights, and licenses derived from such rights

Equipment with an acquisition value in excess of €250,000 can only be financed through depreciation. Only the percentage of costs that are incurred during the project period can be requested and financed. The depreciation rules of the research institution acquiring the equipment apply.

If funding is requested for a piece of equipment which is required specifically for the project, the lead research institution confirms upon submission that they have verified that no comparable equipment that could be used or shared is available within a reasonable distance, and that third-party (co-)financing options have been explored. The research institution that owns the equipment must also ensure that any possible costs arising from the use, maintenance, and repairs of the equipment are covered.

The coordinator is to instruct their research institution to order the equipment and effect payment accordingly. The principles of economy, efficiency, and expediency apply to any

acquisition. The procurement guidelines of the research institution and the provisions of the [Federal Procurement Act 2018](#) (*Bundesvergabegesetz*) as amended apply.

In order to determine the equipment costs (incl. VAT, unless the research institution is entitled to deduct input tax) to be requested, vendor quotes must be obtained before the application is submitted pursuant to the research institution's procurement guidelines. Vendor quotes are submitted to the FWF only upon request.

If a specific piece of equipment is required that is available at the research institution but is in need of repair, funds for repair can be requested instead of funds for a new purchase. The same applies here: The prerequisite for eligibility is that the equipment may not be part of the research institution's infrastructure and is not used for other purposes.

2.3.3 Material costs

"Materials" is defined as consumables and small items of equipment (cost per item less than €1,500 incl. VAT).

The calculation of funds requested for project-specific material costs should be justified based on the project's schedule, work plans, and experimental schedule. Experience from previous projects should be considered in making the calculations.

2.3.4 Travel costs

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

Travel expenses for researchers from national and international research institutions other than the lead research institution and/or the partner research institution(s) can only be granted in exceptional cases. Grounds for the exception must be provided in detail.

Travel and accommodation costs are generally calculated according to the individual travel expenses policies of the lead or partner research institution(s). If no such policies are in

place at the research institution, the federal regulations governing travel costs ([Reisegebührenvorschrift des Bundes 1955, RGV](#)) as amended apply.

2.3.5 Costs as part of national and international collaborations

In the case of cooperation arrangements, costs arising within the context of a research cooperation at the respective research institution are to be borne by that research institution. This does not apply to [cooperation arrangements with researchers from developing countries](#) (see [section 2.3.6](#)).

Funds may only be transferred directly to a cooperation partner (in Austria or abroad) upon presentation of an invoice and only if they are in payment for clearly defined commissions or services and immediately necessary to carry out the Austrian project.

2.3.6 Other eligible costs

- Independent contractor agreements (costs for work of clearly defined scope and content carried out by individuals, provided that they are cost-efficient and justified in the context of the research or arts-based research project)
- Remuneration for services rendered by non-academic participants involved in transdisciplinary research, for example fees, reimbursement for person-days (the services rendered must be disclosed and specified concisely and in detail); when requesting funding for these costs, please bear in mind that non-academic participants may be subject to VAT.
- Costs for necessary project-specific artistic events (funding for these costs shall only be granted in the amount considered by the reviewers to be absolutely essential for carrying out the project)
- Costs for the preparation, archiving, open access, and reuse of research data in repositories in accordance with the FWF's [Open-Access Policy for Research Data](#)
- Costs that cannot be included under personnel, equipment, materials, or travel costs, for example:
 - The use of research facilities, e.g., costs for the project-specific use of available equipment (project-specific "equipment usage time") or large research facilities
 - Monitoring and other support measures for studies
 - Patient insurance
 - Any laboratory animals necessary for the project
 - Project-specific work carried out outside the researcher's research institution (e.g., for analyses carried out elsewhere, interviews, sample collection, etc.)
 - Disposal of project-specific hazardous waste
 - [Cooperation arrangements with researchers in developing countries](#)

- [Equality measures](#): The consortium can budget a maximum of €20,000 per year for equality measures as part of the project's total funding volume.

The procurement guidelines of the research institution and the provisions of the [Federal Procurement Act 2018](#) (*Bundesvergabegesetz*) as amended apply.

2.3.7 General project costs

The approved grant sum includes 10% general project costs that are generally permitted for funding but cannot be requested individually using the abovementioned cost categories. They are subject to the [FWF's Funding Guidelines](#) and the costs must be eligible for funding. These include, for example, costs for conference travel, dissemination activities as well as smaller, unforeseen costs necessary for the project.

Overhead costs for the research institution are not included in general costs.

General project costs are to be entered in the appropriate field in the *Cost breakdown* form and calculated as 10% of the total funding requested. No justification for general costs is needed in [Appendix A](#).

2.3.8 Publication costs

Publication costs cannot be requested as part of the application process. Information on funding options for publications resulting from FWF-funded projects can be found on the FWF website under [Funding Portfolio: Communication](#).

2.4 Resubmitting a previously rejected application

A resubmission is defined as the revision of an application which the FWF has rejected with the same or similar research or arts-based research questions, regardless of the program category. If an application is submitted on the same or a very similar research or arts-based research question and if, in the view of the consortium, this application is not a resubmission but a completely new project, this must be explained in a separate accompanying letter to the FWF Office. 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 appropriate decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide.

Resubmissions must show changes from the rejected application. If an application has been rejected for the standardized grounds 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. Emerging Fields applications that have been rejected for reason C5 are banned for resubmission to the current call.

When resubmitting an application, the following documents must be uploaded:

- An accompanying letter containing an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application must be submitted to the FWF (*Overview_revision*). This overview will not be passed on to the reviewers.
- A response to all reviews of the rejected application must be provided, even if one of the reviewers is to be excluded from reviewing the resubmitted application (see [section 3.2](#)). This response, consolidated into *one* document, will be forwarded to all reviewers assessing the resubmission and should address the recommendations and criticisms included in the previous reviews as well as describe the resulting changes made.

While no deadlines for the resubmission of a rejected application apply, the respective application requirements do need to be complied with. Resubmissions must be submitted as described in [section 2.1](#), i.e., as a separate, new application and not as a supplementary application to the previously rejected proposal.

2.5 File formats, file names, and online forms

The following sections provide an overview of all files and forms to be submitted.

2.5.1 All applications must include the following parts:

a) Files:

- *Synopsis.pdf* (= short project description based on the program's objective)
- *Proposal.pdf* (= project description including Annexes 1–3 and if applicable 4 consolidated in *one* file, with PDF bookmarks for at least the major sections)
- *PI_publication.pdf* (two publications written by each consortium member must be named, documenting fulfillment of the general application requirements)
- *Publication_lists.pdf* (list of all academic publications published in the last five years for all consortium members and postdocs to be funded by the project, categorized into “quality-assured publications” and “other publications”)
- [Total costs.xlsx](#) (if more than one research institution is involved in the proposal)

b) Forms:

- *Research institution assignment*
- *Contact*
- *Application* (to be completed by the coordinator)
- *Program-specific data – coordinator*

- *Program-specific data – consortium member* (this form must be completed individually for each of the up to six consortium members in addition to the coordinator's form; if multiple research institutions are involved, the percentual distribution of funding per research institution must be entered here)
- *Cost breakdown*
- *Academic abstract* (in English)
- *Co-authors*
- *Other cooperation* (if applicable; for national and international cooperation partners)

2.5.2 File uploads, if applicable

- *Cover_letter.pdf* (= accompanying letter; optional)
- *Negative_list.pdf* (= reviewers who should be excluded; optional)
- *Follow.pdf* (= result report or final project report of the previous project for follow-up applications; will be forwarded to the reviewers)
- *Overview_revision.pdf* (= for resubmissions, overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application)
- *Revision.pdf* (= for resubmissions, response to all reviews of the previously rejected application)

3 Processing and Decision on the Application

3.1 Submission and requests for changes

All of the documents specified above must be uploaded in full to [elane](#). Once an application has been officially submitted, the research institution and the coordinator can make no further changes to the application themselves. All applications that have been approved by the lead research institution on or before the deadline of **March 31, 2025, 2:00 pm, Vienna local time** will be checked for completeness and any formal errors by the FWF Office.

The decision-making bodies of the FWF reserve the right to return applications that do not meet the formal criteria without review. The most common reasons why applications are returned without review are (a) a consortium member's publication record does not meet the requirements (see [section 1.3.1](#)), (b) the application does not address specific hypotheses or research questions (see [section 2.1.3](#)), or (c) resubmissions have not been sufficiently revised (see [section 2.4](#)).

If the FWF Office identifies issues with the application that it considers to be rectifiable, it will notify the lead research institution and the coordinator, giving them the opportunity to correct the problems within a period of 10 working days. The requested changes are to be submitted

to [elane](#) as a supplementary application and approved for submission by the lead research institution if applicable. If the **requested changes** are not submitted before the deadline, the decision-making bodies at the FWF will return the application without review.

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

3.2 Excluding reviewers

A list of up to 3 potential reviewers who should not be consulted to review the proposal due to a possible conflict of interest can be uploaded as an additional document. The coordinator must give reasons why they wish to exclude these reviewers. If the reasons for exclusion are professionally and academically sound, the FWF will generally fulfill the coordinator's request and 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](#).

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

3.3 Decision-making process

A detailed description of the decision-making process, the criteria for selecting international reviewers, and detailed rules concerning conflicts of interest and the composition of juries and review panels can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

The Emerging Fields decision-making process consists of the submission phase and three review stages. Submissions must include a project description, a four-page synopsis, and all other files and forms specified in [section 2.5](#).

Stage 1: The first review stage is based solely on the synopsis. Based on the synopsis, an international, multidisciplinary jury determines whether the proposal has the potential to open up a new field of research, transform an existing field of research, and/or bring about a paradigm shift within or between disciplines. The jury is made up of researchers (generally persons working outside of Austria) covering a wide range of scientific disciplines. Members are selected and confirmed by the decision-making bodies of the FWF. The specificity of the program's requirements (interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and/or arts-based research) make the use of a jury necessary. This jury is not a specialized panel. At least two written reviews of the synopsis will be obtained from international jury members. Their evaluation is based on the review criteria described in [Appendix B](#). Based on these reviews, the FWF Scientific Board is expected to decide on the application in June 2025; if the decision is positive, the application will proceed to stage 2.

In stage 1, the jury can also nominate up to two "wild card" projects which it considers to be the most convincing based on the review criteria. These proposals receive a direct invitation to proceed to stage 3 of the decision-making process, i.e., to the hearings.

Applications that do not fulfil the review criteria or fulfil them only in part will already be rejected at stage 1. In the event of a rejection, the jury's reviews will be sent to the coordinator in anonymized form.

Stage 2: Proposals that appear suitable to fulfill the objectives of the program will progress to stage 2. In this stage, each of the complete proposals (synopsis and project description) will be reviewed in detail by three international reviewers. At least three reviews are required before a proposal can advance to stage 3. In exceptional cases, a rejection is permitted on the basis of only two reviews if a third review would not be able to compensate for the overall negative assessment given by the first two reviewers. The jury can confirm or withdraw its wild card nominations based on the reviews obtained. Based on this evaluation, the Scientific Board is expected to decide in November 2025 which applicants will be invited to a hearing.

Stage 3: In the third stage, based on these written reviews, the FWF Scientific Board draws up a shortlist of consortia to be invited to a hearing with the multidisciplinary jury. The Scientific Board is expected to decide on the approval of projects in March 2025, based on the jury's recommendations made after considering the results of the hearings. Projects must commence three to six months after approval.

If approved for funding, the consortium must enclose a set of statutes with the grant agreement specifying the coordinator's responsibilities and competences and setting out the rules of cooperation within the consortium.

3.4 Grounds for rejection

In stage 1 of the review process, two jury members select one of three final assessments based on the synopsis: *fully recommended*, *recommended with reservations*, *not recommended* (see [Appendix B](#)). Proposals that are rated as *not recommended* will be rejected. If the level of competition is particularly high, the FWF reserves the right to reject applications rated as *recommended with reservations* at stage 1, as this indicates that they are only conditionally suited for the program. The coordinator and the lead research institution will be notified of the rejection; in addition, the jury's reviews will be sent to the coordinator in anonymized form.

The reasons for rejecting an application at stages 2 and 3 are assigned to one of five categories (C1–C5) and communicated to the coordinator and the lead research institution; the coordinator is also sent anonymized copies of the reviews and the jury's comments, if applicable. A detailed description of the grounds for rejection can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

3.5 Reviewing 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 repeat review. Resubmissions are, however, usually also evaluated by new reviewers.

3.6 Proposal bans

Applications that are rejected for reason C5 will also be barred for this program's next call and cannot be resubmitted at that time.

Applications that have been submitted to the same program three times (i.e., the original application and corresponding resubmissions) and rejected for reasons C3 or C4 are also barred for this program's next call. Rejections for reasons C1 or C2 do not count towards this total. In general, only topics are banned, not consortium members or applying research institutions.

4 Compliance with Legal Requirements and Standards of Research Integrity

4.1 Legal regulations

Please note that research institution(s) and all persons involved in the project must comply with all legal requirements and safety provisions (e.g., Federal Disabilities Act, Federal Equal Treatment Act) and all embargo and sanction regulations (e.g. Dual-Use Regulation [EU] 2021/821) that apply for the implementation of the project and must obtain all the necessary permits (e.g., from the Ethics Committee, the Animal Testing Commission, the National Heritage Agency, or the relevant foreign authorities).

4.2 Academic integrity

The [Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice](#) of the [Austrian Agency for Research Integrity \(OeAWI\)](#) apply.

Where a breach of these standards is suspected, the ombud of the respective research institution is responsible for investigating the issue. The research institution must report any cases of suspected serious deviations to the OeAWI. 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. For more detailed information, please see [FWF procedure in cases of suspected violation of the standards of good research practice](#).

5 Data Protection and Publication of Project Data and Results

5.1 Data protection

Pursuant to Art. 6 (1) item a of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in conjunction with § 2g of the Austrian Research Organization Act (*Forschungsorganisationsgesetz*, FOG), the FWF processes and publishes personal data (e.g. the title of the submitted project, research institution, academic abstract, PR summaries) necessary for the administration of the funding by the FWF – while safeguarding business and trade secrets – for the purposes of research policy (e.g., presentation of the development of basic research in Austria, economic analyses, funding impact reports, supporting open science, etc.) and for public relations work (publication of excerpts in the FWF annual report, on the FWF website, in press releases, media collaborations, etc.). If necessary, these data are also transmitted to third parties (e.g., for the preparation of research policy studies, on the basis of supervisory duties, in particular §§ 2d and 3a of the Research and Technology Funding Act [*Forschungs- und Technologieförderungsgesetz*, FTFG], to bodies and agents of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and, in particular, pursuant to § 3 [2], § 4 [1], and § 13 [3] of the Court of Audit Act 1948 [*Rechnungshofgesetz* 1948 RHG], to the Austrian Court of Audit as well as to bodies and institutions of the European Union in accordance with European legal provisions). Transmission of data is also based on § 6 (1) item c of the GDPR in conjunction with § 2g of the FOG.

Further information on the data privacy rights of the applicant or applying research institution as well as the contact details of the FWF's data protection officers is available [here](#).

5.2 Publication of project data and results

Proposal summaries must be submitted to the FWF when the grant agreement is returned. Please note that if a grant is awarded, a PR proposal summary in German and English will be published on the FWF website, as well as the grant amount and later, PR results summaries of the project's findings in German and English. The coordinator must ensure that these texts are worded in such a way that legitimate interests of secrecy for reasons of national defense and patent law are safeguarded and business secrets are protected appropriately. [Guidelines for writing PR summaries](#) can be found on the FWF website.

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

The guidelines specified in the grant agreement on acknowledging the FWF as the funding institution and the FWF's [Open-Access Policy](#) apply for any publication of project results (e.g., academic publications, research data, conference papers, and media reports)..

6 Appendices to the Application Guidelines

6.1 Appendix A: Information on the research institution and description of financial aspects

Information on the lead research institution and any partner institutions and the description of project finances must be presented **in English** and appended to the project description as Annex 2. Costs must be broken down and adequately justified for each point below. The list of and justification for the requested funds must correspond to the costs indicated in the *Cost breakdown* form and may not exceed a total of €7 million. The description should be structured as follows:

(a) Details on the lead research institution and the partner research institution(s) where applicable

- Existing personnel (not financed by the FWF, usually the consortium members and research personnel at the research institution(s))
- Existing infrastructure

(b) Information on the funding requested:

- Explain briefly why the personnel requested is needed for the project (number and type of requested positions, job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project)
- Explain briefly why the non-personnel costs requested 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 existing research environment – see also [section 2.3.2.](#)

Please list and provide justifications for the following:

Personnel costs:

Equipment costs:

Material costs:

Travel costs:

Other costs (including independent contractor agreements):

6.2 Appendix B: First review stage – Notes and questions for jury members in the Emerging Fields funding program⁹

A. General information

The Emerging Fields (EF) program is aimed at consortia of outstanding researchers who are prepared to do high-risk, pioneering work in basic research and to courageously depart from established approaches. The focus is on research projects that have the potential to generate groundbreaking findings. The chosen approaches can vary widely, allowing researchers to radically question fundamental elements of traditional models or approaches in their field, combine theories and methods from different disciplines in completely new ways, and/or apply innovative technologies to identify unknown problems or look at existing problems from a completely new perspective. The risk inherent in such projects is also their greatest strength: Researchers' ideas must have the potential to open up a new field of research, transform an existing field of research, and/or bring about a paradigm shift within or between disciplines. Only by taking such risks can the disruptive innovations emerge that truly advance scientific research.

The program is particularly open to interdisciplinary consortia, researchers involved in arts-based research who apply aesthetic and artistic methods, and transdisciplinary approaches that involve non-academic participants from outside the scientific community.

Proposals are evaluated in a three-stage review process. For stage 1, consortia submit a project description together with a four-page synopsis outlining the objectives of the project, its transformative nature, and the qualifications of the consortium. This synopsis is addressed to the multidisciplinary jury of international experts. In the first step, the jury assesses whether the proposal is suitable for the Emerging Fields Program, especially with regard to its potential to open up a new field of research, transform an existing field of research, and/or create a paradigm shift within or between disciplines. The proposals that appear suitable to fulfill the objectives of the program will progress to stage 2. In this stage, each of the complete proposals (synopsis and project description) will be reviewed in detail by three international reviewers. Based on these initial reviews, the FWF Scientific Board draws up a shortlist of proposals, and the consortia are invited to a hearing with the multidisciplinary jury. Following these hearings, the jury makes a funding recommendation to the FWF Scientific Board in stage 3, based on a comparative analysis of the written reviews and the jury's assessments from the hearings.

B. Questions for the jury

To assess the project's suitability to progress to stage 2, please evaluate the four-page synopsis by answering the following questions. In each case, please give detailed reasons

⁹ Further information can be found on the FWF website: [FWF's corporate policy and mission statement](#) and the [Application Guidelines](#) for the Emerging Fields program

for your answers. Should the project be rejected, the reasons you have given will be forwarded in their entirety to the applicants.

1. The project

- How strong is the project's potential to transform the research field(s) concerned and/or lead to a genuine paradigm shift, within a discipline or across disciplines?
- Which features of the project make it “high-risk, high gain”? Do the applicants describe what the risks are and what knowledge would be generated even if the project fails?
- Is the chosen research design likely to achieve the project's goals?
- If the project has a transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and/or arts-based component, has this component been integrated suitably into the research design?

2. The consortium

- Do the consortium members have the necessary and complementary qualifications to reach the project's goals?
- Is the composition of the consortium suited to implementing the transformative research project?

3. Overall assessment and final recommendation

Please answer the following questions, drawing on your comments in sections 1 and 2:

- In your view, is the proposed research likely to fulfill the aims of the Emerging Fields Program?
- Do you recommend it for stage 2 of the review process? Please choose one of the following three options A, B, or C.

☐ A - Fully recommended: The project meets the program objectives and I fully recommend it for stage 2 of the review process.

☐ B - Recommended with reservation: I recommend the project for stage 2 of the review process, but I have some concerns about one or several aspects of the synopsis and/or the consortium.

☐ C - Not recommended: I have major concerns about the proposal's potential to fulfill the objectives of the Emerging Fields Program.

6.3 Appendix C: Second review stage - Notes and questions for Emerging Fields reviewers¹⁰

In all of its programs, the FWF actively supports equal opportunities and equal treatment. The review of a proposal must not put consortium members at a disadvantage for non-research-related reasons such as age, gender, etc. For example, the review of applications should not focus on the researcher's actual age, but on the relation between the researcher's previous research achievements and the length of their research career.

Our commitment to equal opportunities also means considering breaks or delays in applicants' research careers (e.g., due to parental leave; long-term or chronic illness; disability; caregiving responsibilities; etc.), which may have resulted in gaps in a researcher's publication record, unorthodox career paths, or limited international research experience. Please also see our information for reviewers on [Unconscious bias in the decision-making process](#).

Only the ten most important academic publications and the ten most important additional research or arts-based research achievements of a consortium member 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.

Please review this application¹¹ using the following four assessment criteria: 1) project, 2) researchers involved, 3) governance and finance, and 4) overall evaluation. For each of these criteria, we ask you for both written comments and a rating on a scale from "outstanding" 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 coordinator in full and in anonymous form. In the event of approval, the research institution will be allowed to read the anonymized reviews forwarded to the coordinator.

Section 1: Forwarded to the researchers in full

¹⁰ Further information can be found on the FWF website: [FWF's corporate policy and mission statement](#) and the [Application Guidelines](#) for the Emerging Fields program

¹¹ The proposal must meet the FWF's formal requirements, and we ask you to please bear these in mind when writing your review. Please bear these in mind when writing your review. (Key formal requirements: no more than 30 pages for the project description including figures and tables; no more than 5 pages for the list of references; no more than 3 pages for each academic CV, including a description of previous research achievements and the ten most important publications. For further details, please see the [Emerging Fields Application Guidelines](#).)

1) The project

Please assess the extent to which the underlying research idea has the potential to fundamentally challenge a field of research or an established notion of research, such that a transformation or paradigm shift is likely to emerge within a discipline or across disciplines.

Specifically, please address the following:

Nature and quality of research

- a) The clarity and relevance of the research question(s)
- b) The extent to which the research project addresses a particularly transformative idea
- c) The project's potential to shape a research field
- d) The appropriateness of the chosen research design towards achieving the project's goals: Have the chosen methods been described clearly in the proposal?
- e) If the project has transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary and/or arts-based components, have these been integrated suitably into the research design?

Risk and risk management

- f) To what extent is the project "high-risk, high gain"?
- g) Do the applicants spell out what the risks are and what knowledge would be generated even if the project fails?
- h) Have the applicants proposed an appropriate plan for managing the risks involved?

Ethical, sex-specific, and gender-related aspects

- i) Ethics: Have ethical considerations been addressed satisfactorily?
- j) Sex-specific and gender-related aspects: Independently of the gender balance among the consortium (see 2 below), researchers are required to address any relevant sex-specific and/or gender-related aspects inherent in research questions and/or research design. Please assess whether the treatment of these aspects is adequate.

2) The researchers involved

Please evaluate the following:

- a) How qualified are the researchers involved to carry out the proposed research? (When assessing each researcher's career path and publication record, please account for unorthodox career paths and circumstances that may have slowed a researcher's progress, such as parental leave, long-term or chronic illness, disability, or caregiving responsibilities)
- b) Is the composition of the consortium appropriate to achieve the project's goals?

- c) Have the international cooperation partners been well chosen and are they likely to make an important contribution?
- d) How effective are the planned measures for research communication within the consortium, and between the consortium and the international cooperation partners?
- e) Is the gender balance of researchers in the consortium appropriate, or have they missed opportunities to improve that balance?

3) Governance and finance

- a) Have the applicants submitted a convincing plan describing the governance structure and leadership roles within the EF?
- b) Is the proposed budget well justified and have the applicants provided a clear financial management plan?

4) Overall evaluation

What is your overall impression of the proposal? Specifically, what would you consider its key strengths and weaknesses? Please give a clear recommendation in favor of or against funding the project. Please give reasons for your answers, taking as much space as you need.

Section 2: Optional recommendations for the researchers

If you are in favor 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 also have an 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 want submitted to the applicant. Feel free to also give us feedback about the review process and your interactions with us.