FWF Austrian Science Fund

Pursuant to its Funding Guidelines (as amended), the FWF has issued the following Application Guidelines for the

Erwin Schrödinger Program

effective as of February 24, 2026, version 1.0

Discovering what matters.

FWF Austrian Science Fund

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Please note: Explanations of the terms used in the Application Guidelines can be found in the Definition of Terms (Ad-personam-mode).

1 General Information

This document has been prepared in German and English for your convenience. In the event of a dispute, the German version shall prevail.

1.1 Program objective

The Erwin Schrödinger program (hereinafter referred to as the “Schrödinger Fellowship”) aims

- to enable young researchers of all disciplines who are normally based in Austria to work abroad at leading research institutions and in leading research programs and thus gain research experience abroad during the postdoc stage;
- to open up new research approaches, methods, processes, and techniques through such research projects; and
- to thus contribute to the further development of science and research in Austria and make the acquired know-how available and useful for Austrian science and industry.

1.2 What types of projects can be funded?

Funding may be requested for projects in basic research that are clearly defined, innovative, with plausibly described objectives and methods, and are limited in duration.

Proposals featuring one or more of the following attributes are considered innovative basic research: (i) research on new ideas and/or an investigation of new research questions, (ii) the development or application of new research methods, new technologies, or original approaches to solving research questions, or (iii) the application or modification of existing methods, technologies, or approaches to new research questions. Please note that next logical steps or the incremental further development of published data is not considered to be innovative or original.

1.3 Submission

There are no submission deadlines for this program; applications can be submitted at any time. All proposals must be submitted online using the elane digital application portal.

To submit the application online, applicants are required to register at the address shown above. All the necessary forms (see section 2.1.4.), must then be filled out online; additional documents such as the project description are to be uploaded as well. For additional information, see the elane user manual.

Once the application has been submitted, a PDF cover sheet will be generated automatically. For the application to be legally binding, the FWF requires the cover sheet

generated automatically at the end of the submission process, including following necessary signatures:

- Affirmation of applicant;
- Declaration by the host;
- If funding is requested for the return phase, Affirmation of the applicant's Austrian research institution (with stamp)

This cover sheet must be sent to the FWF

a) by conventional mail with the handwritten signature of the applicant and the handwritten signature(s) of the authorized signatory or signatories of the research institute(s) and the stamps of the research institute(s), *or*

b) by email (office@fwf.ac.at) with a scan of the signature(s) and stamps(s) of the research institute(s) and signed using the applicant's **qualified electronic signature** (e.g. ID Austria), *or*

c) by email (office@fwf.ac.at) and signed using the qualified electronic signature of the research institute(s) and the applicant.

The application shall not be considered officially submitted until the FWF receives the cover sheet.

1.3.1 Who is eligible to apply?

Researchers of all disciplines are eligible to apply who meet the following application requirements:

- Doctoral degree (PhD). An application may be submitted at an earlier point in time if all the other requirements are fulfilled and if it appears that the applicant will receive the official doctoral degree (PhD) within the average processing period (approx. four months). Applicants who have completed their medical studies in Austria are only eligible to apply if they have a degree based on curricula N, O, Q 201; N, O, Q 094; or N, O 790, Q 794 or N 090 (please indicate which one in the curriculum vitae).
- Applicants must have had their main place of residence in Austria for at least three of the last ten years at the time of application, and/or must have been working continuously as a researcher in Austria for the last two years preceding the submission of the application (Territoriality principle);
- Applicants must present the invitation from the chosen foreign research institution.
- If the application is submitted from abroad, please note: a postdoc stage[1] abroad (no matter where and at how many research institutions), which is to be extended by a

[1] "Postdoc stage" refers to research experience since the date of conferral of the doctoral degree (PhD).

Schrödinger Fellowship, may not last longer than three years including the Schrödinger Fellowship.

- Applicants who have performed their doctoral work abroad may apply for a Schrödinger Fellowship only on the condition that they carry out the project at a different research institution than the one at which they wrote their dissertation.
- Applicants must have the option to return to an Austrian research institution where they can apply the know-how they gained abroad. If funding is requested for the return phase (see section 2.2.3.), the application must include a coherent description of the way in which the acquired know-how will be applied in Austria (for instance, the continuation or completion of the project, new research projects based on the insights gained abroad, etc.).

1.3.2 Can multiple applications be submitted simultaneously?

Applicants for a Schrödinger Fellowship

- cannot submit parallel applications to the FWF for the same program or for another career development program (ESPRIT, FWF ASTRA Awards). Applicants may apply for FWF funding in other program categories by submitting a separate proposal, provided that they meet the application requirements of the respective program;
- can apply simultaneously to other agencies for funding for the stay abroad. However, applicants are obliged to promptly notify the FWF in writing of such applications to other funding institutions as well as their decisions. The decision-making body of the FWF will decide whether and how much of the third-party funds will be deducted. If substantially identical applications are approved by other national and international funding bodies, and their scope of funding is sufficient to carry out the planned research project, the applicant must choose one of the approved grants. A combination (for instance, to only utilize the return phase funding) is not permitted.

Please note that there are limits to the number of ongoing projects in which one researcher can serve as principal investigator. For further information on restrictions concerning the permissible number of applications and projects, please see the restrictions on the number of projects.

1.4 What are the requirements for applicants?

1.4.1 General requirements

The principal investigator's publication record over the last five calendar 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:** Most relevant in assessing the applicant's publication record are those publications that have been subject to a quality assurance procedure in line with international standards (peer review or an equivalent procedure; in the natural and life sciences, peer review is expected). Journals must usually be listed in Web of Science, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). For journals not listed in those databases, or for monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, or other publication types, the applicant 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 on the website, it is the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence that the publication has been subject to a quality assurance procedure in accordance with the standards of the field.

- **International visibility:** The majority of the applicant's publications must have a wider than national reach. In the natural sciences, life sciences, and social sciences, most of the publications listed must be in English.

- **Number/scope and quality** of the publications must be commensurate with the researcher's expectable career path and the respective discipline. The applicant must have at least two quality-assured and internationally visible publications (accepted for publication and available from the publisher either in print or online) with a substantial and independent contribution by the applicant. In the ESPRIT and Erwin Schrödinger career programs, the application requirement is also fulfilled if, in addition to an already published publication, final acceptance of a second publication can be documented with confirmation from the publisher. At least one publication with first, last, or corresponding authorship is required[2], 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 applicant's contribution must be specified.

If there is any uncertainty about general application requirements or about accounting for career interruptions (see sections 1.4.3 and 1.4.4), the FWF recommends that the applicant contact the FWF Office or the FWF Equal Opportunities and Diversity in Research Funding unit in good time before submitting the 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.

1.4.2 Equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion

The FWF Strategy for Equal Opportunities and Diversity of Researchers applies. This means that breaks or delays in applicants' research careers that have led to publication gaps, unorthodox career paths, or limited international research experience can be taken

[2] In the case of the Life Sciences, the following applies: If the application is submitted more than two years after the doctoral degree has been awarded (at the time when the application is submitted), the applicant must appear as the first, last, or corresponding author in at least one of the two peer-reviewed, internationally visible publications.

into consideration. For further details on accounting for career breaks, please refer to the information on career interruptions.

1.4.3 Consideration of career breaks

The FWF will take justified, documentable career breaks or delays (e.g., due to pregnancy, childcare,[3] caregiving obligations,[4] military or civilian service, flight, and asylum) into consideration when assessing eligibility to apply.

1.4.4 Inclusion of the disabled and chronically ill

The FWF will also take any departures from 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.

1.4.5 Data protection notice

When assessing eligibility, all personal data provided to the FWF by an applicant on a voluntary basis that relates to the information provided in sections 1.4.3 and 1.4.4 above shall be taken into account exclusively to the applicant's benefit (to compensate for disadvantages). Please use 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 also 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.

1.5 What types of funding can be requested?

1.5.1 Basic fellowship (personnel costs)

The amount of the fellowship depends on the costs of living in the respective country (see Appendix B).

[3] Childcare includes parental leave periods, if applicable.

[4] 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.

1.5.2 Funding period

The Schrödinger Fellowship may be requested for a period of between 10 and 36 months (including the return phase), although the stay abroad itself may only last between 10 and 24 months.

The length of the return phase is based on the length of the stay abroad as part of the Schrödinger Fellowship and may be requested as follows:

- Stay abroad 10–14 months: + max. 6-month return phase
- Stay abroad 15–19 months: + max. 9-month return phase
- Stay abroad 20–24 months: + max. 12-month return phase

1.5.3 Travel costs

The principal investigator receives a travel subsidy. Funding can also be requested for the travel costs of family members (spouse/partner and children), provided that they will reside with the applicant abroad for at least six months (see Appendix B).

1.5.4 Career development allowance during the period abroad

The principal investigator is entitled to a monthly allowance of €300 for career development measures. This can be used to cover travel to international conferences, project-specific continuing education (e.g. on methodological skills), coaching and/or personnel development measures, summer and/or winter schools, travel to cooperation partners, necessary field and/or archive work, and acquisitions under €1,500 (small items of equipment) needed for the project (see Appendix B).

1.5.5 Child allowance during the period abroad

This is paid for children who will reside with the principal investigator abroad for at least six months. The amount is prorated based on the actual stay of the child (see Appendix B).

1.5.6 Maternity benefit

If a fellow gives birth during the abroad phase, the fellow is entitled to a four-month maternity benefit. The fellowship will be automatically extended by this period of time (see Appendix B).

1.5.7 Pension insurance

The costs for voluntary payments into the statutory pension insurance (*Selbstversicherung*) or continued optional insurance (*Weiterversicherung*) pursuant to the General Social Insurance Act (ASVG) in Austria during the time of the fellowship abroad will be refunded.

1.5.8 Publication costs

Publication costs cannot be requested as part of the application process. Information on funding options for publications resulting from the proposed research can be found on the FWF website under the Communication portfolio. For publication costs during the phase abroad, please contact publikationskosten@fwf.ac.at.

1.5.9 Note on project funds during the abroad phase

The FWF assumes that the foreign research institution will provide all the means necessary to carry out the research project (this also includes *bench fees, overheads*, etc.). In exceptional and duly justified cases where this can be proven to be impossible, an application for additional support may be submitted to the FWF. The application must be accompanied by a separate breakdown of required costs, a precise description of how the funds are to be spent, and a detailed justification of why the hosting researcher (=host) or the research institution cannot fulfil the requirements listed in the "*Declaration by the host*". The FWF would like to point out that the approval of a Schrödinger project does not necessarily mean that the additional funding request will also be approved.

1.5.10 Return phase funding

Funding for the return phase covers the funding of a senior postdoc employment contract at the Austrian research institution and a lump-sum payment of **€15,000.00 per year for project-specific costs**. Of those project-specific costs, €2,000.00 per year can be used for coaching or personal development.

1.5.11 Child allowance for the return phase

Female principal investigators who are employed full time after the birth of a child can receive a child allowance in the amount of **€9,600 per child per year** (= gross salary including all employer and employee taxes; paid out 12 times a year) up until the child's third birthday.

1.5.12 Additional information

A return phase cannot be requested for persons who, at the time of application, have already secured the option of returning to the research institution at which they plan to complete the return phase (in the form of a long-term or permanent contract of employment permitting a return).

Since the Schrödinger Fellowship is a postdoc program, fellows are expected to conduct independent research, which means that it is not possible to apply for a Schrödinger project as part of one's PhD studies.

A Schrödinger Fellowship may only be held once.

Multiple funding is not permitted (see the FWF Funding Guidelines). This means that you are required to inform the FWF immediately if an application which is thematically related to the FWF proposal has been or will be submitted by you or anyone else to the FWF or another national or international funding organization or has been approved by that organization, either before the FWF proposal was submitted, at the time of submission, or at any time during the decision-making process. If your FWF proposal is approved, this requirement to provide information remains in effect until the project is completed.

2 Application

2.1 Sections of the application

When preparing application documents, 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.

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
- Hypotheses / research questions / objectives
- Approach / methods
- Level of originality / innovation
- Primary researchers involved

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

2.1.2 Project description:

Project descriptions are limited to 20 consecutively numbered pages, including the table of contents (required), and where applicable, a list of abbreviations, headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.

The project description must in addition include Annexes 1–4 and if applicable 5:

- Annex 1: List of literature cited in the application (*References*), on no more than 5 pages
- Annex 2: CV and description of previous research achievements of the applicant, on no more than 3 pages
- Annex 3: Invitation of the foreign research institution
- Annex 4: Recommendation letter of the Austrian research institution
- Annex 5: (optional): Collaboration letters of national and international cooperation partners (no more than 1 page per letter)

The entire project description including these annexes must be uploaded as *one* file entitled *Proposal.pdf*. The FWF will send this document to the reviewers.

2.1.3 Additional documents

- Required:
  - Two publications written by the applicant must be named, documenting that the applicant fulfills the general requirements to act as principal investigator (publication record, see section 1.4.1) – for internal FWF use only
  - Publication list for internal FWF use to assess the eligibility to apply and to check for conflicts of interest with potential reviewers (see section 2.2.4)
- Where applicable:
  - 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 2.3), a response to the

reviews (*Revision.pdf*) and an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application *(Overview_revision.pdf)* must be uploaded.

- 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.

2.1.4 Forms to be completed

- Required forms: *Application form*, *Program-specific data*, *Academic abstract* and *Co-authors*;
- Where applicable: *Other cooperation*

2.2 Application content and form

2.2.1 Application language

To allow applications to be reviewed by international peers, applications must be submitted in English. If desired, a version in German or another specialist language may be added as a supplement. Submission solely in German or another specialist language other than English is only permitted in exceptional cases. Such exceptions apply exclusively to applications from the fields of linguistic and literary studies involving only texts in German or languages other than English. In all such cases, it is absolutely necessary to consult the project officers of the Career Programs department prior to application. An academic abstract for the project as well as a brief yet convincing statement explaining why submission in a language other than English is justified for substantive academic reasons will be required. The final decision shall be made by the relevant decision-making bodies of the FWF.

2.2.2 Project description: Scope and formatting requirements

The project description may not exceed 20 pages. It must contain a table of contents with page numbers. Optional elements, such as a list of abbreviations, figures, figure legends, tables, footnotes, etc., must also be included in the 20-page limit.

The continuous text in the project description and Annexes 1 and 2 must be written in 11 pt. font with 15-20 pt. spacing and at least 2 cm margins. A standard, easily legible font must be used for the body text. The form requirements (font type and size, line spacing, and

margins) of the project description also apply for the additional documents, except for any documents not prepared by the applicant, such as letters of invitation, recommendation and 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). The choice of citation conventions or style guide is up to the applicant, but must be implemented consistently throughout the application. If available, a DOI-address or another persistent identifier should be used for the literature cited.

2.2.3 Project description and annexes

The project description may not exceed 20 pages including the table of contents and must include the following sections, each designated by headings:

1) Table of contents
2) State of the art of relevant international research (including own preliminary work, if applicable) and relation of the project to this context
3) Clearly defined aims and hypotheses or research question(s) of the project
4) Description of the project's anticipated level of originality or innovation
5) Methods
6) Work plan and timeline
7) National and/or international collaboration partners (if applicable): Please specify the intended collaboration partners and the subject of the intended collaboration(s) or the planned contribution to the project. In addition to any legal regulations, FWF's own regulations on international collaborations also apply (see the FWF website for more information). All national and/or international cooperation arrangements named in the project description must be listed on the *Other cooperation* form (one form must be completed for each cooperation partner). Cooperation partners named in the description who make a significant contribution to the research project can be confirmed by means of a collaboration letter.
8) Academic, project-relevant qualifications of the researchers involved
9) Information on the chosen foreign research institution[5]:

   Justification why this research project should be carried out at this research institution, especially why collaborating at the research institution is necessary and appropriate for achieving the aims of the project.

[5] If it is necessary to carry out the project, applicants may request a stay abroad at a maximum of two research institutions. The stay at the second research institution must last at least 3 months.

10) Information on career development and the option to return:
    Importance of the project for the academic and research reputation of the applicant and his or her career development

    In what way can the acquired know-how be applied as part of the return phase? Is there an employment relationship with a return option (see section 1.5.12.)? In addition, information must be provided on the following: planned project work / planned completion of the project in Austria or planned new research projects based on the insights gained abroad. If a return phase is requested, the applicant should also provide information on the work plan and timeline and a justification for the choice of research institution for the return phase.

11) All potential ethical, safety-related, or regulatory aspects[6] of the submitted project and how the applicant plans to deal with them must be described in a separate section. These questions need to be addressed briefly in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any ethical issues.

12) Any potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects[7] of the proposal must be detailed. To what extent are sex-specific and gender-related aspects considered in the proposal? How will they be integrated into the research approach? These questions must be briefly addressed, even if the applicant does not feel that the project involves any such aspects.

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

Annex 2: CV and description of previous research achievements

The academic CV and research achievements should be described on no more than 3 pages.

The academic CV must be structured as follows:

- *Personal details:* Personal data (name, researcher unique identifier[s] 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)

6 For instance, the European Commission's *Ethics for Researchers* or *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* can serve as a guide here.

7 Sex-specific and gender-related aspects in the research approach refers to the content of the planned research, not the number of women on the research team or the composition of the team. Key questions: Is the research approach likely to produce sex-specific and gender-related findings? Are there already findings on sex-specific differences in the field of research? If so, what findings? How and where are these integrated into the research approach? (Further information is available on the FWF website.)

- *Career breaks* (if any): List of career breaks or delays (see also section 1.4.3)
- *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 principal investigator'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*: List of no more than ten of the most important published or accepted academic publications (journal articles, monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, proceedings, etc.); for each publication, either a DOI address or another persistent identifier should be indicated, if available.
- *Additional research achievements*: List of no more than ten of the most important research achievements aside from academic papers; examples of such research achievements include freely accessible research datasets including software and code, awards, conference contributions, keynote lectures, significant research projects, peer review activities, open peer review, the promotion of early-stage researchers, exhibitions, initiatives for interaction with society (including citizen science or transdisciplinary activities), science communication activities, knowledge transfer activities, licenses, or patents. Please present each research achievement individually, i.e., one award is listed as one research achievement, acting as a reviewer for a journal is another research achievement, one science communication initiative is another research achievement, etc. If available, a persistent identifier or a link to the respective research achievement must be provided.

Annex 3: Invitation of the foreign research institution with the signature and letterhead of the research institution: free-form statement from the host on the content of the project and the suitability of the applicant.

Annex 4: Recommendation letter of the Austrian research institution with the signature and letterhead of the research institution: free-form statement on the applicant, on the topic and the importance of the research project and on the potential employment of the applicant after the end of the project (return option).

Annex 5 (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 of the last five calendar years written by the applicant must be named, documenting that the applicant fulfills the general requirements to apply (see Template *PI-publication*). The FWF will base the applicant's eligibility to apply on these publications.

Publications_list.pdf: A list of all research publications[8] of the applicant and the host over the last five calendar years (broken down into "quality assured publications" and "other publications"). This file helps the FWF to determine if there are any potential conflicts of interest with reviewers. It will not be forwarded to the reviewers

2.3 Resubmitting a previously rejected application

A resubmission is defined as the revision of an application addressing the same or similar research questions as a proposal the FWF has previously rejected, regardless of the program category. If an application is submitted on the same or a very similar research question and if, in the view of the applicant, 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, or 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.

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

- *Overview_Revision.pdf:* An accompanying letter containing an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application must be submitted to the FWF. This overview will not be passed on to the reviewers.
- *Revision.pdf:* 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. A limit of 3 pages per review applies, however, the FWF only checks the *maximum number of pages* in the case of 2 or more reviews (e.g., 2 reviews = 6 pages,

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

3 reviews = 9 pages). In these cases, the number of pages *per review* does not necessarily have to be adhered to, as long as the total number of pages is not exceeded. The response should be written objectively and respectfully, avoiding false claims and any offensive statements, and may not include any recommendations for actions or assessment. The format requirements specified in section 2.2.2 apply.

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, i.e. as a separate, new application and not as a supplementary application to the previously rejected proposal.

2.4 File formats, file names, and online forms

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

2.4.1 All applications must include the following parts:

a) Files:

- *Proposal.pdf* (project description incl. Annexes 1-4 and where applicable 5, with PDF bookmarks, at least for the major sections)
- *PI-publication.pdf* (two publications written by the applicant must be named, documenting that the applicant fulfills the general requirements to apply)
- *Publications_list.pdf* (publication lists of the applicant and the host for the last five calendar years, broken down into quality assured and other publications)

b) Forms:

- *Application form*
- *Program-specific data*
- *Academic abstract* (in English)
- *Co-authors*
- *Other cooperation* (if applicable; for national and international cooperation partners)

2.4.2 File uploads – if applicable:

- *Cover_letter.pdf* (accompanying cover letter; optional)
- *Negative_list.pdf* (list of 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 Decisions on the Applications

3.1 Submission and requests for amendments

All of the files and forms specified above must be uploaded in full to elane. Once an application has been officially submitted, the applicant can make no further changes to the application themselves. All applications are checked for completeness and any formal errors by the FWF Office.[9] The decision-making bodies of the FWF reserve the right to return any applications that do not meet the FWF's formal criteria without review. The most common reasons why applications are returned without review are (a) that the applicant's publication record does not meet the requirements (see section 1.4.1), (b) the application does not address specific hypotheses or research questions (see section 2.2.3), and c) resubmissions have not been sufficiently revised (see section 2.3).

If the FWF Office identifies issues with the application that it considers to be rectifiable, it will notify the applicant, giving them the opportunity to correct the problems within a reasonable period of time (generally 3 weeks). The requested changes are to be submitted to elane as a supplementary application. If the **requested amendments** 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 applicant must briefly explain why these reviewers should be excluded. If the reasons for exclusion are professionally and academically sound, the FWF will generally fulfill the applicant'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 Number of reviews required

At least two reviews are necessary for an application to be approved.

[9] The FWF checks applications and reviews for plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools on a random basis and in cases of suspected violations of academic standards. The use of any AI tools in preparing the proposal must be briefly described in the *Co-authors* form.

3.4 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.

Information on the average duration of the review process can be found in the FWF-Dashboard.

When the review process it is completed, the FWF Board considers the reviews and decides whether the proposal should be funded. The applicant will be informed in writing of the FWF's decision.

3.5 Grounds for rejection

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

3.6 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.

3.7 Proposal bans

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

Applications that have been submitted three times to the same program 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 the applicant was officially notified of the decision). Rejections for grounds C1 or C2 do not count towards this total. In general, only research topics are banned, not applicants or applying research institutions.

4 Compliance with Legal Requirements and Standards of Research Integrity

4.1 Fellowship abroad

During the stay abroad, the fellows conduct their work under their own responsibility. The awarding of the Schrödinger Fellowship does not constitute an offer of a contract of employment nor a contract for work and services. The fellows themselves are responsible for obtaining health and accident insurance and making any contributions to a pension plan (see section 1.5.7).

The Schrödinger Fellowship is awarded for a research activity that is to be performed outside of Austria and therefore is not subject to tax in Austria pursuant to § 3 para. 1 sentence 3 point d of the Income Tax Act (EStG).

4.2 Return phase in Austria

During the return phase in Austria, the type of employment is a contract of employment for senior postdocs (according to the current personnel costs). In exceptional cases, a research grant can be paid instead (if there is no institutional affiliation).

Upon the consent of a research institution that is subject to the 2002 Universities Act (UG 2002) or that has a corresponding agreement with the FWF, the research institution will be the employer. In the case of a research grant, the principal investigator is classified as self-employed.

4.3 Legal regulations in the return phase

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).

4.4 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. Research institutions are required to

report any cases of suspected serious violations of the standards to the ÖAWI. 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, 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 (*Forschungsorganisations-gesetz*, 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, 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 Technologie-förderungsgesetz*, FTFG], to bodies and agents of the Federal Ministry of Women, 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

Please note that if a grant is awarded, a PR proposal summary in German and English – to be submitted to the FWF when the Grant Agreement is returned – 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 principal investigator 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).

Appendix A: Notes and questions for reviewers in the Erwin Schrödinger program [10]

The FWF actively supports equal opportunities and equal treatment in all of its programs. The review of a proposal must not put researchers 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 his/her 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 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 the Journal Impact Factor

Please review the present proposal[11], using the following eight assessment criteria:

1) innovation or novelty,
2) quality of the proposed research,
3) approach/methods and feasibility,
4) qualification of the applicant,
5) suitability of the chosen supervisor and the host research institution,
6) career development / knowledge transfer,
7) ethical, sex-specific, and gender-related aspects and
8) overall evaluation.

For each of these criteria except 7) 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 applicant in its entirety and in anonymous form.

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[10] Further information can be found on our website: FWF's corporate policy and mission or the Application guidelines for the Erwin Schrödinger Fellowships

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

Section 1

1) Innovation or novelty:

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

2) Quality of the proposed research:

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

3) Approach/methods and feasibility:

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

4) Qualifications of the applicant

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

5) Academic suitability of the chosen supervisor and the host research institution abroad

How well suited is the host researcher for supervising the research project? Is the intended research institution suitable for carrying out the project?

6) Career development / Knowledge transfer

How important is the fellowship for the career development of the applicant? How well can the knowledge gained be integrated into the Austrian research community

7) Ethical, sex-specific, and gender-related aspects:

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

b) *Sex-specific and gender-related aspects:*[12] Applicants are required to address any relevant sex-specific and/or gender-related elements inherent in research questions and/or research design. Please assess whether the treatment of these components is adequate.

[12] Sex-specific and gender-related aspects in the research approach refers to the content of the planned research, not the number of women on the research team or the composition of the team. Key questions: Is the research approach likely to produce sex-specific and gender-related findings? Are there already findings on sex-specific differences in the field of research? If so, what findings? How and where are these integrated into the research approach? (Further information is available on the FWF website.)

8) Overall evaluation:

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

Section 2: Optional recommendations for the applicant

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

Section 3: Confidential remarks to the FWF

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

Appendix B: Fellowship rates per year 2026

The fellowship rates are divided into basic zones according to the costs of living in the respective country.

Country of destination (in alphabetical order)	ZONE	Amount (in €)
AUSTRALIA	3	54.600,00
BELGIUM	2	50.300,00
CANADA	3	54.600,00
DENMARK	4	59.000,00
FINLAND	3	54.600,00
FRANCE	2	50.300,00
GERMANY	2	50.300,00
GREAT BRITAIN	3	54.600,00
HUNGARY	1	45.900,00
ICELAND	5	63.400,00
IRELAND	3	54.600,00
ISRAEL	4	59.000,00
ITALY	1	45.900,00
JAPAN	2	50.300,00
NETHERLANDS	2	50.300,00
NORWAY	3	54.600,00
SPAIN	1	45.900,00
SWEDEN	2	50.300,00
SWITZERLAND	5	63.400,00
USA	4	59.000,00

****Other countries upon request****

Additional funding

Travel costs (one-time payment): max. **€1,500** (stipulated by the FWF Office)

Spouse/partner (only together with the children): 100%; Children: 50%

Additional subsidy for children per year (per each child residing with the fellow for at least six months): Zones 1 + 2: **€5.000,00**; Zones 3–5: €**6.000,00**

Career development allowance during the period abroad: max. **€3.600,00** p. a.

Maternity benefit: €14.300,00 (for 4 months)