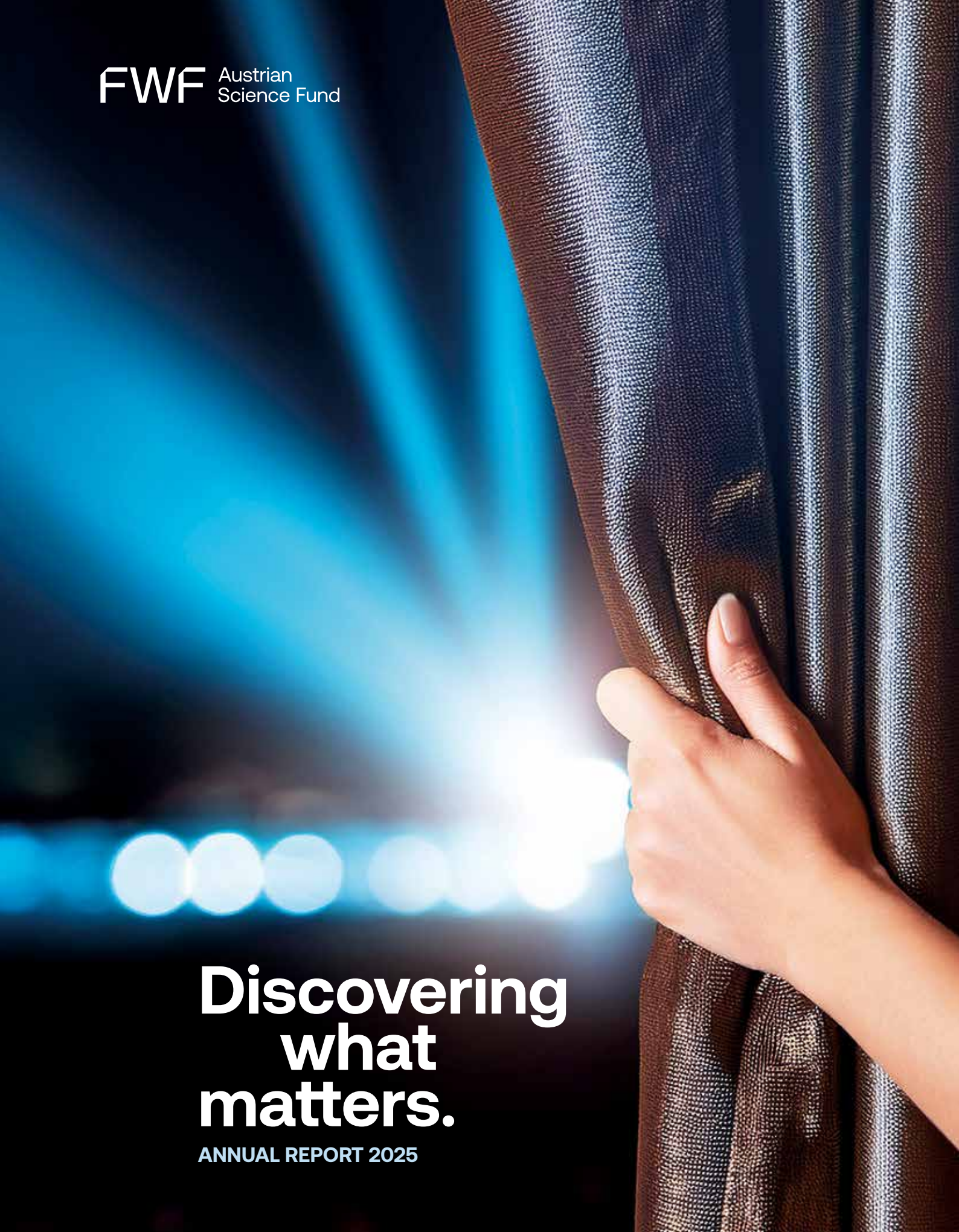




Discovering what matters.

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Let's connect!



Funding Balance 2025

Applications & Approvals

Total new grants in € million

339.1

Total application volume in € million

1,549.8

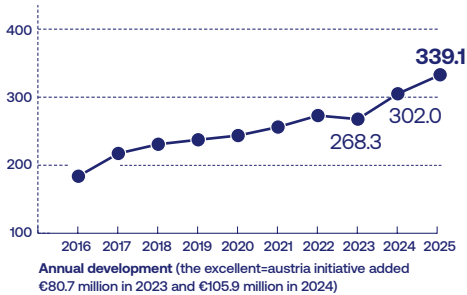
Approved applications

749

Approval rate 2025 in %: 24.0
Approval rate ø 2016-2025 in %: 24.5

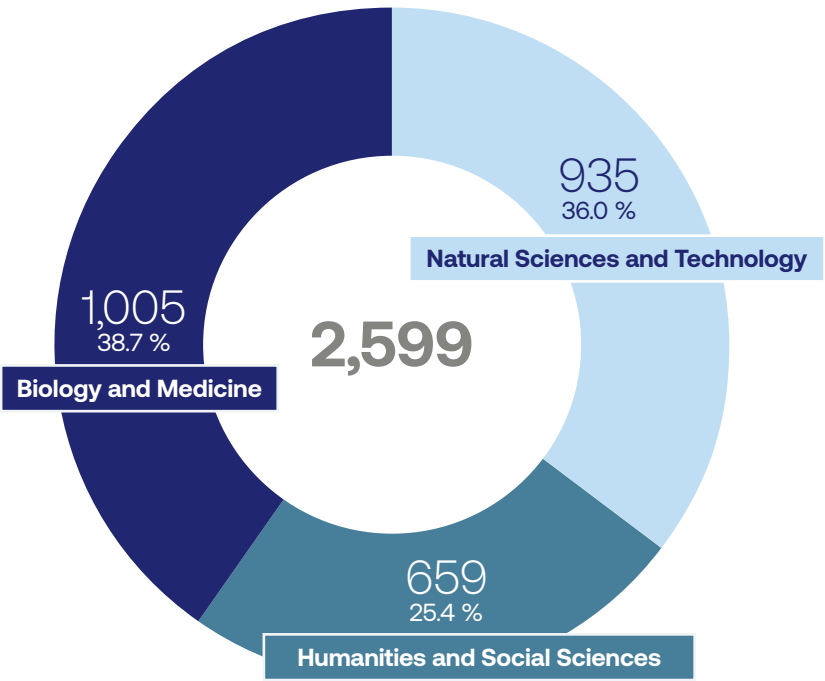
Number of applications handled

3,119

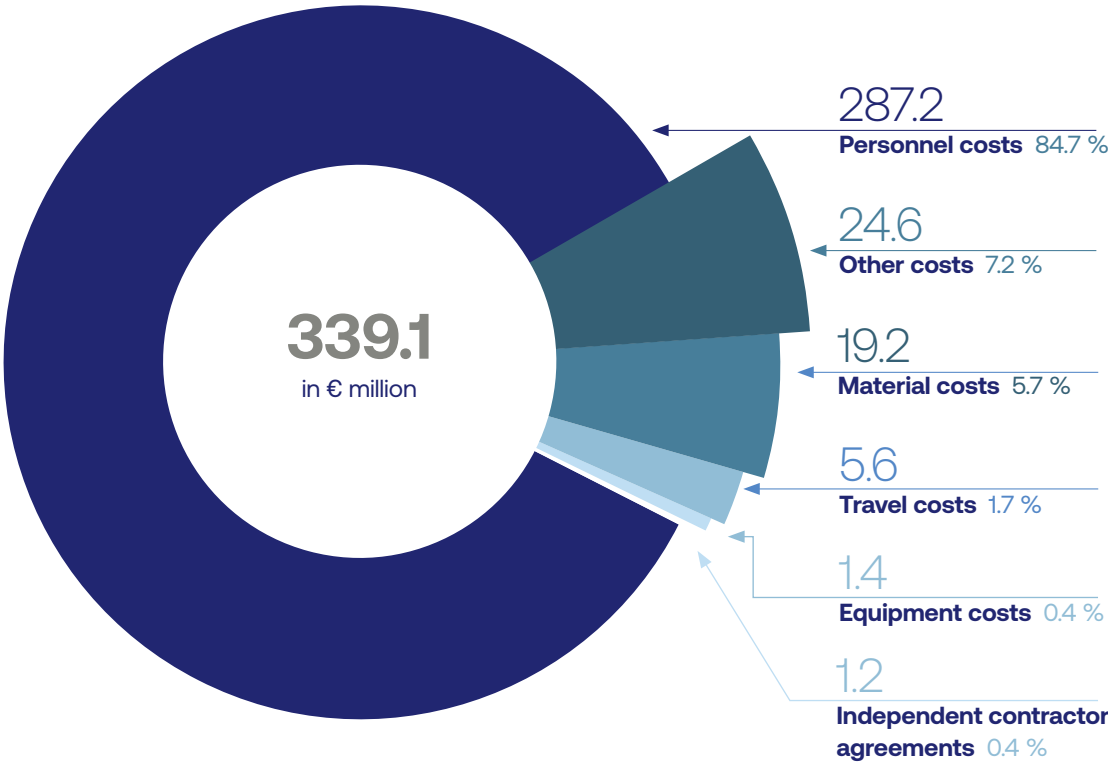


Further Key Figures

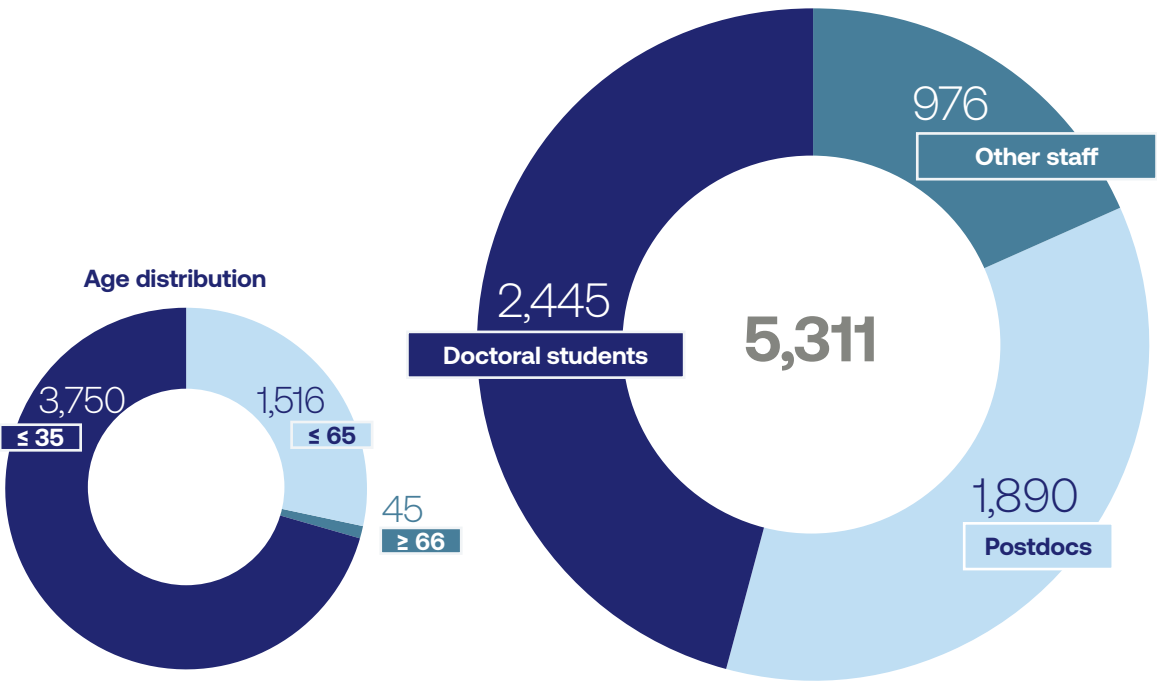
Ongoing Projects by Discipline Group



Grants by Cost Category



FWF-Funded Research Staff



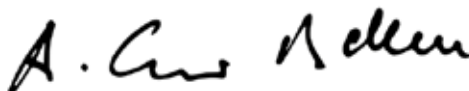
To understand the ***WORLD***,
we need to both look closely and see the big picture.
Basic research takes time, but it opens up entirely
new horizons. This is why we support pioneering
researchers on their roads to discovery.
The wealth of their insights is the capital of

Challenges in and for Science

Science is facing numerous challenges. This is nothing new, it's virtually an integral part of science. Or put another way, you could say that without challenges, there would probably be no science at all. Basically, the only thing that changes is the nature of the respective challenges. Some have been looming for years and have recently increased in intensity and urgency, such as man-made climate change. Others are just now coming at us like a torrent, like the myriad changes brought about by the ever-improving artificial intelligence. And still others are consequences of political developments: Here I am thinking primarily of the freedom of research and access to its findings. And then, at least in Austria, the question of funding is also a current issue and a major challenge.

In 2025, the FWF did its utmost to support and fund the work of excellent researchers, not only securing academic careers, but also helping to make new findings possible. The numbers resulting from these efforts, which are illustrated in this Annual Report, are impressive, especially when you consider how much creativity and energy, how much talent and knowledge the more than 5,000 FWF-funded researchers put into their scientific work.

I am confident that institutions such as the FWF will continue to strengthen research in Austria and give young scientists in particular the opportunity to demonstrate their excellence in an international environment.



ALEXANDER VAN DER BELLEN

Federal President of Austria

Fair Chances for All Talents

Science is a cornerstone of a strong democracy: It provides a fact-based foundation for political decisions, strengthens critical thinking among the population, and supplies the facts needed to counter disinformation and populist simplifications. Especially at a time like today when democratic institutions are under pressure worldwide, independent research, free speech and discourse, and the protection of scientific integrity are crucial for a resilient democracy.

Reliable and quality-assured research funding is needed in the long term to strengthen science in this role. The FWF and its programs ensure the independence of basic research, fund high-risk, innovative projects, and give researchers the freedom they need to pursue long-term work.

Equal opportunities and diversity in the science and research system are particularly important to me. The FWF steps up to its responsibility in this area: through transparent procedures, targeted programs to fund early-stage researchers, improvements made to increase the compatibility of research careers with family life, and measures to increase the number of female researchers, especially in disciplines where women are often underrepresented. Excellent research can only thrive in an environment where all talents – regardless of gender, ethnic origin, or life situation – have the same fair chances. This is why we introduced the Perspectives Package for Science and Research in 2025, which helps research institutions attract international researchers and strengthens Austria as a research location.

A highlight in 2025 was the Austrian Science Awards, where the FWF ASTRA Awards were presented for the first time – and it is especially noteworthy that half of these awards went to women. Elly Tanaka, the 2025 FWF Wittgenstein Award winner, is an outstanding personality whose internationally recognized work in regeneration research stands for excellence, pioneering spirit, and perseverance, making her an important role model for young researchers. I would also like to congratulate the FWF on granting €340 million in funding and facilitating 749 new projects. A total of 2,599 projects employing over 5,000 people are currently being funded by the FWF.

Following the successful establishment of the excellent=austria initiative over the past few years, the Clusters of Excellence and their over 1,000 researchers have already started to report promising results and are actively engaged in outreach, dialog, and knowledge transfer activities. I also expect the next award round of the second Emerging Fields program in early 2026 to again result in outstanding and interesting projects.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the FWF and all its employees and congratulate the successful researchers and participating research institutions on their achievements.



EVA-MARIA HOLZLEITNER

Federal Minister for Women, Science and Research



In only 18 months, a team led by quantum physicist Philip Walther from the University of Vienna developed a mini quantum computer the size of a shoebox and successfully launched it into space. This puts the Austrian project years ahead of the international competition.

Despite the sensitive technology, the system survived the rocket launch and is functioning perfectly. The computer sends experimental data directly to Earth from a satellite at an altitude of around 550 kilometers.

High-power yet energy-saving computing performance through quantum technology is particularly promising for satellite missions, allowing them to carry out efficient data processing directly on the satellite. Possible applications include the collection of weather data or the detection of forest fires. This first quantum computer suitable for use in space will provide important insights for future quantum satellite systems.

The next step for the researchers in Vienna is to develop an even more powerful computer, ideally on its own satellite. "We have successfully shown that quantum processors, especially those based on optical platforms, also work reliably in orbit," says Philip Walther. "This opens up completely new possibilities – for basic research, satellite technology, and machine learning."



FIRST QUANTUM COMPUTER FROM AUSTRIA IN SPACE

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Making the World Easier to Understand

Knowledge is not made to order. It grows slowly, often in a previously unknown direction, sometimes over generations – and this is precisely where its strength lies. Basic research does not follow a strict timetable but the logic of knowledge: asking questions, patiently and persistently.

The researchers funded by the FWF at Austria's universities and non-university research institutions have been asking questions this way for decades. So much rests upon the foundations created by their findings: Tomorrow's medications are developed from today's basic biochemical knowledge. The technologies that will drive our economy forward tomorrow are still theoretical models or lab experiments today. And the social

institutions that support our democracies would be unthinkable without the contributions of the social sciences and humanities. Last but not least, arts-based research opens up knowledge spaces that neither pure science nor pure art alone can occupy, fundamentally expanding our understanding of the human condition.

The past year has once again shown us that a vibrant, independent scientific culture is crucial for a democratic society. At a time when simple answers are more popular than complex truths, research committed to complexity is more socially relevant than ever. Science without freedom is not science – it is at best a confirmation of preconceived opinions. The FWF works with the entire scientific community to help ensure this freedom: through competitively

awarded funding, the international peer review process, and by trusting excellent researchers to know which questions are worth asking.

How are Austria's researchers doing? We took this question seriously and asked more than 3,300 scientists as part of a survey conducted by Spectra. The results paint a differentiated but generally positive picture: Austria can hold its own as a science location with a high level of internationality and freedom of research, and two thirds of respondents reported being satisfied with their overall professional situation. That's good to hear. At the same time, many researchers recognize a need for structural changes – particularly when it comes to securing reliable career prospects for young researchers, dismantling traditional hierarchies, and increasing the social recognition of research. Respondents rated the FWF's funding programs positively for the most part but expressed criticism of the low approval rates for proposals and a perceived lack of transparency when applications are rejected. You can find all the details of the survey on page 76.

We interpret these results as both a confirmation and a mandate. They show that we are doing well in many areas but also point out where there is room for improvement. Funding requirements are diverse, ranging from work in small, focused teams to large-

scale research networks in the Clusters of Excellence, from targeted career support to science communication. Equal opportunities and strictly avoiding discrimination are as important to us as ensuring good scientific practice and making research ecologically sustainable. The FWF is committed to meeting all of these demands and is aligning the further development of its funding portfolio accordingly. The most recent example of our efforts in this regard is the establishment of Specialized Research Groups, a funding program that provides flexible and tailor-made support for inter-institutional teams.

We would like to extend our thanks to the researchers who are making society better with their discoveries (some of which are highlighted in this Annual Report). We also thank the FWF boards and committees, especially the members of the Scientific Board, the international reviewers, and the universities and non-university research institutions for the successful cooperation over the past year. With 749 newly approved projects and a funding amount of €340 million, it was possible to maintain the growth of basic research in 2025.

We would also like to thank the political decision-makers and the public – because science is not an end in itself. It is a promise to make the world easier to understand, step by step.

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CHRISTOF GATTRINGER
President



URSULA JAKUBEK
Executive Vice-President



CHRISTOPH BINDER
Vice-President of Research,
Biology and Medicine



GEORG KASER
Vice-President of Research,
Natural Sciences and Technology



EVA KERNBAUER
Vice-President of Research,
Humanities and Social Sciences

Discovering What Matters

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) has been facilitating cutting-edge research in Austria for almost sixty years now. What began in 1968 with a budget of around €2.7 million and 114 approved projects has grown to around €340 million and 749 approved projects in 2025. The FWF's mission remains unchanged, however: strengthening Austria as a research location and providing thematically open funding to researchers from all disciplines and at every career level.

Since its foundation, the FWF has played a decisive role in the development of the Austrian science system and has established itself as a guarantor of scientific excellence, independence, and international competitiveness. Its main responsibility is to fund research at universities and non-university research institutions, based solely on the criterion of scientific excellence.

Generating new knowledge

Originally intended as an instrument for modernizing and internationalizing the Austrian research landscape, the FWF began to orient itself increasingly towards international standards in the 1970s and 1980s and introduced review procedures based on the principle of an international peer review. This principle remains at the heart of its funding culture to this day and ensures independent quality control.

One key feature of the funding portfolio is that it is open to all topics: Projects from all scientific disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, natural sciences and technology, as well as biology and medicine are equally eligible for funding.

After a rigorous international review process, funding decisions are made by the FWF Scientific Board as an independent body composed entirely of scientists. This independence is an important pillar of the FWF and the basis for trust in the projects it funds.

The principle of excellence

The FWF continuously develops its funding portfolio on the basis of external evaluations: The FWF ASTRA Awards, a new career funding program for postdocs, were presented for the first time in

2025, and the Specialized Research Groups for cooperative research projects were also launched that year. The excellent-austria initiative, which has been running since 2023, now includes nine Clusters of Excellence and eleven Emerging Fields. The FWF and the participating research institutions are investing a total of around €325 million in these programs.

With increasing digitalization and the challenges of global research transparency, the FWF has been focusing more and more on open access publishing

Integrity and ethics

As a founding member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity, the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) promotes compliance with the rules of good research practice and internationally established ethical standards. Its own activities and funding effectiveness are also reviewed and evaluated by independent experts on a regular basis.

Equal opportunities and diversity

The FWF promotes equal opportunities for all genders in world-class research and is committed to gender mainstreaming in all its activities. Its career development programs support researchers in their diverse career paths.

and open science since 2004, in an effort to make research results freely accessible. This promotes not only the exchange of knowledge but also strengthens the social relevance of science.

For researchers and their ideas

Today, the FWF is regarded as the backbone of Austrian basic research: It creates the conditions needed for Austria's cutting-edge research to become and remain internationally visible, for creative ideas to emerge, and for new generations of researchers to work in a climate of freedom and excellence.

The FWF's Guiding Principles

Transparency and fairness

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) is committed to distributing funds transparently and fairly. Its funding programs are designed to be inclusive and respond to researchers' many different needs. The FWF rigorously avoids conflicts of interest, includes multiple cross-checks at all stages, and communicates its procedures and decision-making process clearly.

Excellence and competition

Research quality is key, and the global arena of ideas is highly competitive. The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) invests exclusively in researchers whose projects prove to be outstanding in an international context and whose proposals receive excellent reviews from international peers.

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International cooperation

Finding facts and generating results are the key to successful research. International cooperation, open access to knowledge (open science), and critical reflection are what make truly interdisciplinary research possible and establish trust in science. The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) is committed to facilitating and supporting research collaboration across national borders.

Sustainability

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) prioritizes climate-friendly, ecological, and social sustainability in everything it does. The FWF also works hard to create the conditions researchers need to be able to conduct their projects in a sustainable and environmentally-conscious manner.

Independence and diversity

The autonomy of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) is protected by law, and its funding decisions are made independently. Researchers from all disciplines, regardless of their academic position, are given the time and freedom they need to gain new insights.

Dialog and cooperation

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) sees itself as an equal partner in dialog and provides an open forum for the exchange of knowledge. It seeks to build bridges and facilitate communication between the scientific community, research institutions, business, politics, the media, and the public, and encourages critical discourse on the role of science in a future-oriented, enlightened society.

Why Does Knowledge Matter?

Guest commentary by **Tim Crane**
Director of Research, FWF Cluster of Excellence
“Knowledge in Crisis”

When Wikipedia first became big on the internet, many academics and intellectuals were very suspicious of it. How could a crowd-sourced repository of information about everything on earth really be accurate? It seemed perfectly fine when you used it to find out things about which you were ignorant, but sometimes when you looked for things about your own area of expertise, it was inaccurate, eccentric, random, and messy. It was a bit like reading the newspaper. I generally trust what I read in reputable print newspapers on matters to do with politics and the world, but whenever the papers report on something I know about — philosophy or science, say — their reporting is invariably inaccurate, in small but annoying ways. (Curiously, I never generalized this lesson to the other subject-matters the newspapers reported on.)

I used to tell my philosophy students to avoid philosophy entries on Wikipedia. But things have changed. Wikipedia has improved hugely, and is still improving. The advice I give to students these days is that Wikipedia is usually a good source, though they must be careful when cutting and ‘accidentally’ pasting it into their essays. Wikipedia is now one of the many wonderful online sources available to students, many of them free and most of them well-edited.

However, the widespread adoption of generative AI has taken things in a different direction. In addition to using

About the author

Tim Crane is Director of Research of the Cluster of Excellence “Knowledge in Crisis” and professor of philosophy and prorektor at Central European University in Vienna. He founded the Institute of Philosophy at the University of London and was Knightbridge Professor at the University of Cambridge.

chatbots like ChatGPT and Claude to create documents, people use them for internet searches, to answer questions and requests for information or facts. Google’s Gemini is one of the most popular AI chatbots and is becoming integrated into the whole Google package. In a very important new development, an ‘AI summary’ is now the default first response in a Google search.

This might all seem fine — after all, don’t we all use Google and Wikipedia interchangeably without thinking, and simply rely on the results? What is the difference between looking up something on Wikipedia and using a Google AI summary? Aren’t they ultimately the same kind of thing? I want to argue that they are actually very different, and the difference derives from fundamental facts about knowledge. Wikipedia has a right to be called a knowledge store, AI chatbots do not. Let me explain.

In a recent interview, the Nobel Prize winner and founder of Google DeepMind, Sir Demis Hassabis said that one reason that Large Language Models (LLMs, the computational structures behind today’s AI chatbots) are so successful is that they are ‘starting with all of

human knowledge, what we put on the internet.’

This claim is very revealing. On the face of it, it might seem plausible — even allowing for exaggeration — but in fact it is profoundly wrong.

Let us begin with the phenomenon of making a mistake. Everyone knows that chatbots make mistakes. Or more precisely, they convey information that isn’t true. We have all experienced it, and this tendency has not been eliminated even from the most advanced models (Google standardly reminds readers of its AI summaries that ‘all responses may include mistakes’). AI researchers have taken to calling these mistakes ‘hallucinations.’ AI hallucinations range from making up non-existent academic or legal documents, to fabricating stories about real people, to simple mathematical and logical errors.

AI scientists tend to dismiss these hallucinations as teething problems, minor malfunctions in the system which can be eliminated as the models are refined and trained further. But in fact, from the point of view of the AI machine itself — that is, the point of view of what it is designed to do — these are not malfunctions. What the chatbot is designed to do is to produce

grammatical sentences in response to a prompt, whose content is relevant to the prompt. Hallucinations are therefore not malfunctions: the machine is doing what it is trained to do.

For this reason, the evocative word ‘hallucination’ is deeply misleading. A visual hallucination is when the visual system produces experiences which radically misrepresent how things really are — for example, the hallucinations of those who take LSD, or more tragically those suffering from Charles Bonnet Syndrome or alcoholism. Hallucinations are a failure, a malfunctioning in the visual system. The system is failing to do what evolution designed it to do: represent the visual world accurately. But this is not the case with the hallucinations of LLMs.

The fact that LLMs are not designed to represent things correctly also explains why it doesn’t matter, from their point of view, that not all the information they are trained on is correct. Some of it is misleading, incomplete, or plainly deceptive. This doesn’t matter if the purpose of the machine is to output grammatical sentences. But it does matter if they are meant to create knowledge.

What is wrong with Hassabis’s claim that LLMs are trained on ‘all of human knowledge,’ then, is not just that what is on the internet is incomplete, and therefore not the whole of knowledge; but more importantly, because a lot of what is on the internet is not knowledge at all. It is in the nature of knowledge — a matter of definition, if you want to put it that way — that knowledge must be

“Wikipedia has a right to be called a knowledge store, AI chatbots do not.”

true. If you claim to know that the sun orbits the earth, you are wrong, and therefore you cannot know it. You only think you know it, but you do not know it. And if you claim to know that MMR vaccines cause autism, you are wrong, and therefore you cannot know it, no matter how strongly you believe it.

Some people may object here that people have different ‘knowledges’ and we should not dismiss these alternative views. This is a misunderstanding. Of course, people have different and incompatible views, and how we behave towards those with different views is an important ethical and political question. But if these views are not correct, then they cannot be knowledge. Knowledge is essentially a true or correct representation of reality.

The importance of this point cannot be overstated. The concept of knowledge is central to all human cultures: Not all human languages have distinct words for eating and drinking, or for he and she, but all human languages have a word for knowledge, where this implies truth. Knowledge — no matter what you call it in your language — is the concept that classifies a certain kind of correct or true representation. If it is not true, it can’t be knowledge. There is no false knowledge.

But the distinction between truth and falsehood is invisible to LLMs. They construct sentences based on interactions with billions of texts on the internet.

But it is not their role — nor the role of the underpaid data-labeling employees who classify their outputs — to distinguish between true and false texts. Any text is good enough, so long as it is relevant to the prompt.

This, then, is the key to understanding the difference between Wikipedia and LLMs. The aim of Wikipedia is to get the correct information, and it tries to achieve this with its huge collection of volunteers, who are regularly updating entries and correcting the interventions of others, according to the fairly strict Wikipedia protocols. What they are aiming at is accuracy, of which truth is a specific version. Sometimes contributors make mistakes, and they are corrected by others. No doubt mistakes remain. But the point is that Wikipedia, unlike an LLM, aims to be trained on the opinions about the real world provided by the volunteers, with the overall goal of representing the world correctly. This is one of the reasons why some leading scientists who are critical of LLMs — like Gary Marcus and Yann LeCun — have argued that AI machines need ‘world models’ in addition to their text-producing abilities. How this idea will develop is one of the

most interesting things in AI at the moment.

Someone may object here that most LLMs have swallowed Wikipedia anyway, so what is the real difference in principle between these two systems?

Now, of course it is good that LLMs are drawing on Wikipedia, rather than just on things like conspiracy theory websites. The difference, however, is about the aim of the systems, not just what they are trained on. Although Wikipedia contains false information, its aim is to produce true or correct information. It is a flaw in a Wikipedia entry if it contains falsehoods; but as we have seen, a hallucination in a chatbot is not a flaw, given the point of the chatbot. Wikipedia contributors are working with the aim of making the entries as correct as possible; LLM data labelers do not have that aim.

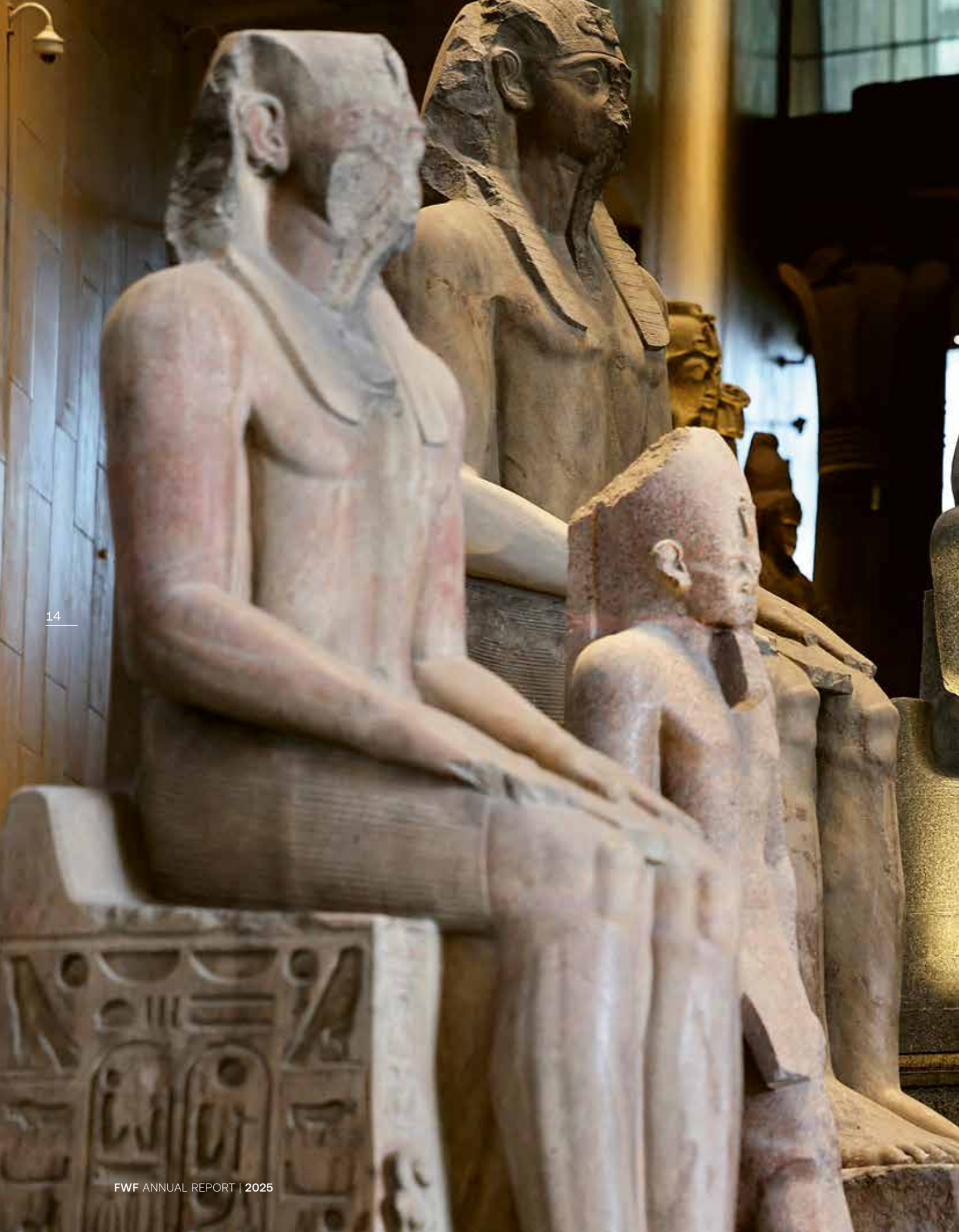
Wikipedia gives no absolute guarantee of correctness — there is no such thing. But what it gives you is a reliable way of finding things out about the world. LLMs give you a reliable way of producing coherent texts in a few seconds. But they give you no reliable way of finding out about the world. This is why Wikipedia can be a source of knowledge and LLMs are essentially not a source of knowledge, because reliability is essential to the way we acquire knowledge. Knowledge requires truth, but not just truth — because you can obtain a truth by accident (for example, by a lucky guess). What you need for knowledge are reliable methods for achieving truth — for example, by using your eyesight, appealing to established reliable

“Unless we have a proper understanding of how the working of these machines relates to facts about truth and knowledge, we will dig ourselves deeper into the pit of ignorance and confusion.”

authorities or by using scientific experiments to confirm theories. The idea of a reliable way of achieving truth is the essence of knowledge.

In the FWF Cluster of Excellence “Knowledge in Crisis,” we are applying these fundamental ideas from the theory of knowledge (epistemology) to all of today’s various crises of knowledge — of which the crisis of AI is only one. We have had workshops and public events discussing the relevance of the philosophy of truth and knowledge to the crises, and our researchers have published academic articles and books on these subjects. We collaborate with researchers from other fields — for example, science communication, social sciences, psychology, and economics — on questions of common interest; and this year we will collaborate with the FWF Cluster of Excellence “Bilateral AI” on public events discussing the meaning of today’s AI.

It is remarkable how deep the philosophical roots of these crises go. Sometimes the epistemological crises are discussed merely in terms of things like science denial (e.g., vaccine denial) or the problem of misinformation and disinformation, where people are being deliberately misled about political matters in social media. These are important problems, and at Knowledge in Crisis we have been working hard to understand them. But the epistemology of AI — in particular of LLMs — is something which is less obvious, much deeper and threatens the heart of our knowledge-producing practices. Unless we have a proper understanding of how the working of these machines relates to facts about truth and knowledge, we will dig ourselves deeper into the pit of ignorance and confusion which the AI companies are creating for us. One of our ambitions in Knowledge in Crisis is to create such an understanding, and distribute it to everyone.



AUSTRIAN RESEARCH IN EGYPT

The background of the page is a photograph of several ancient Egyptian statues in a museum setting. In the foreground on the left, a large seated statue of a pharaoh with a long, striped beard is visible. Behind it and to the right, there are several standing statues, including one of a woman in a long dress and another of a seated figure. The statues are made of dark stone and are displayed in a well-lit room with large windows in the background.

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Irene Forstner-Müller lives for her job. The renowned archaeologist not only conducts her research in Egypt, she has also lived there for over 20 years. Among other sites, Forstner-Müller is leading the excavations of the Avaris settlement in the eastern Nile delta, close to today's Tell el-Dab'a. In ancient times, the city was a hub for important trade routes by sea and land.

Another focus of her work is in Kom Ombo in Upper Egypt. Forstner-Müller and her team are investigating the development of a city that was characterized by exchange and mobility for thousands of years. The ancient city and its relationship to the river landscape is an ideal case study to understand how transportation routes influenced urban life in ancient Egypt.

The researcher from the Austrian Archaeological Institute of the Austrian Academy of Sciences was named "Austrian of the Year 2025" for her international research achievements. "Our work would be impossible without the generous support from Austria and Egypt," she emphasizes. Her extensive knowledge is also in demand at the spectacular Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo, which just recently opened its doors to visitors. As a member of the museum's scientific advisory board, she designed the exhibition of artifacts from Tell el-Dab'a.

Discoveries



FWF's Science Magazine scilog: Get to Know Researchers and Their Discoveries

The FWF's science magazine opens up insights into basic research in Austria. scilog gives readers first-hand, evidence-based knowledge – understandable, fact-based, and directly from the people generating it: Austria's leading scientists.

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The magazine covers internationally relevant findings and provides context on current developments. What can we do about the increasing antibiotic resistance? How severely does plastic pollute our environment? What do political scientists say about the current social upheavals? Where can mathematics open up new perspectives – and what good is quantum physics?

scilog is about big questions and big breakthroughs as well as blind spots and small steps on the way to long-term progress.

scilog – the science magazine of the FWF.
On demand and wherever you are.

scilog.fwf.ac.at



Podcast

“Was wir wissen”

How is new knowledge generated, what are researchers working on, and why are diverse perspectives on unsolved questions more important today than ever before? The new FWF podcast “Was wir wissen” (what we know) went on air to mark the 10th anniversary of scilog, the FWF’s science magazine.

Listeners can delve deep into key scientific topics in six episodes per season. The podcast asks all the important questions: What makes us humans unique? What is reality? And what role does coincidence play in our lives? Hosts Francesca Grandolfo and Thomas Zauner interview top researchers from all over Austria. Together they contextualize theories, explain connections, and reveal a treasure trove of little-known facts.



From Primordial Bacteria to Walking Upright

What do we know about being human? The first episode traces human history from the origin of life four billion years ago to the first human settlements, focusing on the key question: Are we really unique?



The Age of Humankind

The second episode deals with humans’ influence on the environment. Has our influence already triggered a new geological era, the Anthropocene? How can we find this out, and what effects would it have?



How Do Microbes Affect Us?

Microbiomes are everywhere: inside us, on us, and in the environment. They are strongly influenced by our lifestyle. What influence do microbiomes have on us and our environment?



What Makes People Tick?

What exactly is cognition, and what is neurodiversity? What differences can and can’t we identify – for example in autism or ADHD?



Do Animals and AI Actually Talk?

How does language work? How does human language differ from how animals communicate? And what about artificial intelligence – can it talk?



Are We Alone in Space?

Is there life out there? Why are we exploring space? And how can we study the atmosphere of exoplanets that are light-years away? The final episode of the first season of “Was wir wissen” revolves around these questions.

A Look Back at the Year's Most Popular Stories

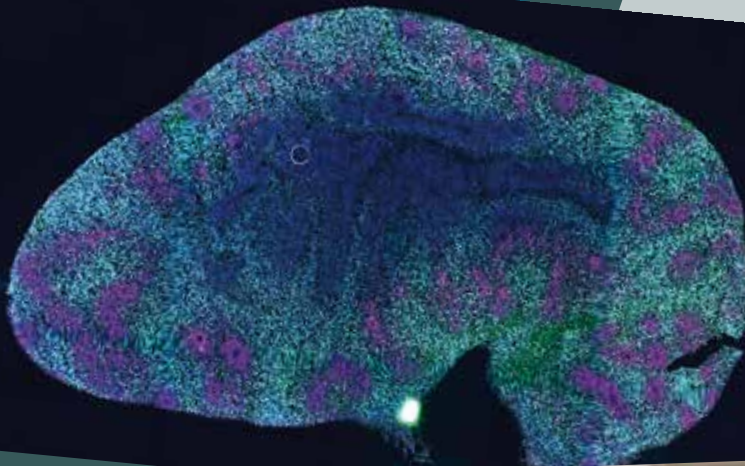
From the old masters of the Baroque period to endangered mountain lakes, from questions of aging to research policy and behavioral research. The entire spectrum of basic research can be experienced in scilog magazine.



Hope Via Clicks: Reaching People in Crisis through Websites

Initial studies confirm that information on the internet can make an important contribution to suicide prevention. Psychologist Benedikt Till and his team are now testing and developing best-practice examples.

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A Molecular Fountain of Youth for the Brain

What happens in the brain as we age? Will we one day be able to rejuvenate nerve cells? Seeking answers to these questions, an Innsbruck-based research group has succeeded for the first time in observing aging processes in miniature brains.



Fathers between Childcare and Patriarchy

Families with fathers who take extended parental leave or receive childcare allowance are uncommon in Austria. Sociologists in Vienna have studied which experiences and everyday practices prompt fathers to take this rare step.



European Politics under the Spell of Conspiracy Theories

In the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, conspiracy theories became a politically relevant phenomenon. In an international project, political scientist Reinhard Heinisch is researching their political impact and how counter-narratives can be found.



How Drones Learn to Fly Autonomously

We are still miles away from truly autonomous robots that are able to navigate through a complex and changing environment. At the University of Klagenfurt, Jan Steinbrener is experimenting with drones that attempt to do just that.



“We Need to Show More Commitment”

How is Europe reacting to current developments in the USA, and how can young researchers stay competitive? The head of the European Research Council, Maria Leptin, talks about the role of research in times of crises, the autonomy of research funding, and what Europe is facing in the future.

Can the Placebo Effect Help Children Lose Weight?

The placebo effect works even when a drug is known to contain no active ingredient. A research team in Graz is now investigating this approach as an intervention for obese children.



When Energy Fails

Even minimal exertion can worsen the condition of people with chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). Awareness of ME/CFS has increased since the coronavirus pandemic and the rise in Long COVID, but diagnoses are still lacking. In this interview, Francisco Westemeier talks about his search for effective treatments.

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Turning Waste into Green Energy

Biogas plants could be a crucial stepping stone on the path to achieving climate neutrality. Microbiologist Eva Maria Prem researches complex microbial communities in reactors with the aim of optimizing biogas production. She received a Zero Emissions Award for this work.



Austrian Phoenix Founders Award for Pills Instead of Shots

The Vienna-based company NovoArc has developed a technology that significantly improves the transport and storage of medications – and, above all, their bioavailability in the body – and was awarded the Austrian Phoenix Founders Award for this achievement.



A Museum Hunt for Old Viruses

How have pathogens evolved? How do zoonoses occur? Researchers led by Martin Kuhlwilm attempted to trace the evolution of viruses using museum artifacts and discovered some unexpected results.



23



Pointers by the Old Masters

In 15th- and 16th-century paintings, pointing gestures were frequently used to direct the viewer's gaze and attention. Using sophisticated eye-tracking technology, art historian Temenuzhka Dimova conducted empirical tests to verify this assumption.

Researchers in the Spotlight

The video series “Wissenschaft bewegt” (science moves) introduces viewers to the people behind research results. Internationally recognized experts from the Austrian scientific community talk about their research and new findings, the spirit of discovery, and formative personal experiences.



Women and politics in the “Box, blue”

In a Munich archive, historian Katrin Keller stumbled across an item listed only as “Box, blue.” It turned out to contain documents of the House of Palatinate-Neuburg. To Keller’s surprise, this included hundreds of letters from and to Empress Eleonore Magdalene Theresia of Palatinate-Neuburg (1655-1720), wife of Emperor Leopold I. The letters, which are now available online, show that women have always been involved in politics.

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“Plants can’t run away”

Plants hold a special fascination for biologist and Wittgenstein Award winner Jiří Friml. Since they can’t escape danger by running away like humans or animals can, they have developed special abilities to adapt to their environment. Friml is interested in how plants have developed these survival mechanisms and how they work. He also discovered that plants have more in common with humans and animals than we realize.



Safety first for cybersecurity

How can blockchain technologies, browsers, and apps be secured in a way that protects billions of users from misuse and criminal activity? For computer scientist Matteo Maffei, security comes first. Together with his team at TU Wien, he develops innovative solutions that protect users and their privacy as well as software developers from hacker attacks.



A quantum leap in time measurement

Physicist Thorsten Schumm and his team are the world's first researchers to have succeeded in exciting an atomic nucleus using laser light. The breakthrough at TU Wien's Institute of Atomic and Subatomic Physics (ATI) has had far-reaching consequences for basic research. Atomic nucleus clocks have the potential to provide the most precise timekeeping in the world – much more precise than previous atomic clocks. This paves the way for the development of improved and safe technologies such as guidance systems for the visually impaired or self-driving cars.

Establishing the basis for fair taxation

In his many years of research, Michael Lang has worked on numerous case studies involving both private individuals and large companies. Lang is a globally recognized expert in the field of international tax law. He focuses on countries where double taxation treaties are in place, studying recent case law and recommendations and regulations from organizations such as the OECD or the EU.



Heart health at a tipping point

Heart cells perform enormous feats every day. If they have to do so under stress and high blood pressure for a long time, their performance will deteriorate. FWF START Award winner Senka Holzer is investigating the cellular processes that lead to heart failure. She compares healthy cells with diseased cells in detail using methods she has developed herself.

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Europe's global footprint

Stefan Giljum, a researcher at WU Vienna, is investigating the global cycle of raw material consumption. Since global supply chains are complex and often opaque, his international team is identifying major environmental hotspots and their effects on the surrounding regions. The findings provide important insights for businesses and policymakers, which have become increasingly important in light of current geopolitical developments.



On the Road

Science is international, and mobility benefits researchers. This is the unanimous feedback from the fellows of the Erwin Schrödinger Program, which gives them the opportunity to gain important international experience.

In the guest articles in the “On the Road” series, young researchers tell scilog readers about their time abroad at locations such as New York, Sydney, and Tokyo.

1



2

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Trigon

Kapittelweg

Donders Institute for Brain
and Behaviour
Centre for Cognitive Neuro

Radboudumc
Cognitive Neuroscience

Radboud Univ

3



4





❶ **Dynamic RNAs in a dynamic city**

In New York, “the subway is all you need for a trip around the world,” writes chemist David Klingler about the city’s impressive diversity, which extended right into his laboratory.

❷ **Surfing the beta wave through Nijmegen**

Neuroscientist Elie El Rassi studied the functions of the brain at the Donders Institute in the Netherlands.

❸ **Lessons for today from the history of philosophy**

At the historic St. George Campus of the University of Toronto, philosopher Sarah Tropper examined the impact of historical upheavals.

❹ **Looking for vestiges of a “bygone world”**

At UC Berkeley, legal scholar Miriam Gassner investigated how the emigration of Austrian legal scholars in the period from 1933 to 1945 affected their legal thinking once in US exile.

❺ **A boost to the immune system from Oxford**

Cell biologist Alexander Leithner studied the communication among immune cells at the University of Oxford’s renowned Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology. He especially benefited from the institute’s long-standing and international expertise when it comes to the application of basic research.

❻ **Postdoc-by-the-sea**

Physicist Michael Horodyski reports that in the US, people are more confident when it comes to implementing ideas. He researched the quantum aspects of photons at MIT in Boston.



Read the guest contributions



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BREAKTHROUGH FOR SUSTAINABLE BATTERIES

“Sometimes it’s all about seeing the obvious,” says Stefan Freunberger, researcher at the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA). The problem of how to stop batteries from aging prematurely due to oxidation processes remained unsolved for decades. One simple solution was overlooked until chemist Stefan Freunberger had a flash of inspiration: Adjust the pH value.

But let’s start at the beginning. The idea is to develop new types of batteries, and the focus here is on a particularly reactive form of oxygen known as singlet oxygen. In living cells, it is produced during cellular respiration in the mitochondria. Although this provides a lot of energy, it also produces aggressive types of oxygen that can damage cells.

Stefan Freunberger has discovered that the same singlet oxygen is also produced in modern lithium batteries, where it also attacks organic materials, causing the batteries to age more quickly. His idea of changing the pH value (specifically the measure of acidity in non-aqueous media) did the trick. His team was able to show that a lot of singlet oxygen is produced under acidic conditions but significantly less under alkaline conditions.

With this surprisingly simple solution, which was published in *Nature*, the chemist is attracting interest not only in battery research but also in biology. This is because human cells can also control singlet oxygen – for example immune cells that use it as a weapon against pathogens.

Awards

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WM Wittenberg 1843



2025

ELLY TANAKA
Biochemistry

2024

JIŘÍ FRIML
Cell Biology

2023

HANS J. BRIEGEL
Physics

2022

CHRISTA SCHLEPER
Microbiology

2021

MONIKA HENZINGER
Computer Sciences

2020

ADRIAN CONSTANTIN
Mathematics

2019

PHILIPP THER
History

MICHAEL WAGNER
Microbiology

2018

HERBERT EDELSBRUNNER
Mathematics
URSULA HEMETEK
Ethnomusicology

2017

HANNS-CHRISTOPH NÄGERL
Physics

2016

PETER JONAS
Neurosciences

2015

CLAUDIA RAPP
Byzantine Studies

2014

JOSEF PENNINGER
Genetics

2013

ULRIKE DIEBOLD
Physics

2012

THOMAS A. HENZINGER
Computer Sciences
NIYAZI SERDAR SARIÇİFTÇİ
Physics

2011

GERHARD J. HERNDL
Marine Biology
JAN-MICHAEL PETERS
Molecular Biology

2010

WOLFGANG LUTZ
Demography

2009

JÜRGEN A. KNOBLICH
Molecular Biology
GERHARD WIDMER
Computer Sciences

2008

MARKUS ARNDT
Physics

2007

CHRISTIAN KRATTENTHALER
Mathematics
RUDOLF ZECHNER
Molecular Biology

2006

JÖRG SCHMIEDMAYER
Physics

2005

BARRY J. DICKSON
Neurobiology
RUDOLF GRIMM
Physics

2004

WALTER POHL
History

2003

RENÉE SCHROEDER
Biochemistry

2002

FERENC KRAUSZ
Physics

2001

MEINRAD BUSSLINGER
Immunology
HERIBERT HIRT
Biochemistry

2000

ANDRE GINGRICH
Social Anthropology
PETER A. MARKOWICH
Mathematics

1999

KIM ASHLEY NASMYTH
Cell Biology

1998

WALTER SCHACHERMAYER
Mathematics
PETER ZOLLER
Physics

1997

GEORG GOTTLÖB
Computer Sciences
ERICH GORNIK
Physics
ANTONIUS UND MARJORI MATZKE
Molecular Biology

1996

ERWIN F. WAGNER
Biochemistry
RUTH WODAK
Linguistics

FWF-WITTGENSTEIN AWARD WINNER 2025

Elly Tanaka Pioneer of Regeneration Research

When it comes to the regeneration of complex body structures, Elly Tanaka is among the world's leading researchers. Her research subject: the Mexican axolotl, a salamander with spectacular abilities. It can regenerate entire limbs, heart tissue, or even parts of the spinal cord within just a few weeks. This

extraordinary property makes it the star of modern regenerative biology.

In the 1990s, the future FWF Wittgenstein Award winner began to systematically establish the axolotl as a model organism. Her laboratory developed genetically modified animal lines, optimized molecular tools for use in salamanders, and finally decoded



the huge axolotl genome – the largest known genome of an animal. With this work, Tanaka laid the foundation for an entire generation of regeneration researchers. Today, many of her former staff members run their own laboratories all over the world. Their axolotl colony with over 240 transgenic lines is considered an international hub for the scientific community.

At the center of her work is the question of how exactly the body regenerates lost structures. Her team discovered that specialized cells return to a stem-cell-like state after an injury, which initiates regeneration. The research group also identified molecules that trigger and control tissue regrowth. The 60-year-old researcher achieved a scientific breakthrough in 2025 by

decoding the molecular “position code”: Cells in the injured tissue activate a signal that tells them their location in the body and what structure needs to be created and where. This work, published in *Nature*, is considered a milestone in modern biology.

Based on her findings on the axolotl, Tanaka is investigating why mammals – including humans – have lost their ability to regenerate tissue in the course of evolution. The results provide approaches for new strategies to replace damaged tissue or promote regeneration. This opens up new perspectives, particularly in human medicine.

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ELLY TANAKA was born in Boston, Massachusetts. She studied biochemistry at the University of California and at Harvard University. After a research stay at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research in London, she founded her own laboratory at the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics in Dresden in 1999. She was appointed as a professor at the Center for Regenerative Therapies Dresden in 2008, and later became the Center’s director. From 2016 to 2024, Tanaka was Senior Group Leader at the Research Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP) in Vienna. Since 2024, she has been Scientific Director at the IMBA – Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the Vienna BioCenter.

FWF ASTRA Award Winners 2025



Philipp Erwin Berghofer University of Graz
100 years of quantum mechanics:

A philosophy to explain the inexplicable

Quantum mechanics is widely recognized as one of the most successful theories in science, but even after a hundred years, it remains mysterious. Even Niels Bohr saw it less as a description of external reality and more as a theory for categorizing experiences. Until now, however, a strict epistemological basis has been lacking. Philosopher Philipp Berghofer wants to change this: Drawing on the phenomenological tradition inaugurated by Edmund Husserl, he aims to provide a phenomenological-epistemological foundation for understanding quantum mechanics.



Eric Burton University of Innsbruck
Coloniality in the Alps:
Rethinking Tyrol's global entanglements

The "Provincializing Coloniality" project examines the history of 20th-century Tyrol through a decolonial lens, demonstrating how regions lacking colonial ties were nevertheless integral to the network of imperial relationships. Historian Eric Burton examines local cultural practices, institutions such as colonial goods stores, settler colonialism, as well as forms of transnational solidarity and political interventions. Drawing on archival research and oral history interviews, he highlights Tyrol's transnational dimensions and opens up new perspectives on regional and global history.

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Jan Dreier TU Wien

Understanding networks, simplifying algorithms

With his project UNISTRUC, computer scientist Jan Dreier seeks to uncover the underlying principles governing complex data networks, ranging from road systems to social networks. The project is the first to combine two leading theoretical approaches – sparsity and twin-width – into a unified framework. His team uses innovative methods to break down even chaotic networks into clear, manageable components. UNISTRUC connects logic, combinatorics, and algorithm design, laying the groundwork for more efficient computer programs in the future.



Alexander Glazman

University of Innsbruck

Exploring the geometry of phase transitions

In his project, mathematician Alexander Glazman is investigating statistical physics models, which are large systems of interacting particles. The aim is to understand phase transitions and the behavior of the models at transition points. The focus is on the geometry of interfaces separating different states in two-dimensional systems. Glazman wants to reveal emergent symmetries and random fractals and find a universal structure underlying many models.

Gernot Grabner

Medical University of Graz

Discovering new ways to treat liver disease

Liver steatosis affects 25% of all people and can lead to cirrhosis, cancer, and organ failure. A mutation in the PNPLA3 gene greatly increases the risk, but its exact role is still unclear. In his ASTRA project, Gernot Grabner and his team will develop new chemical tools to clarify the function of PNPLA3 in human model systems. Understanding how PNPLA3 drives liver damage will open up new ways to prevent and treat progressive liver disease.



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Elisabeth Gruber

University of Innsbruck

Bringing the chemistry of the universe into the laboratory

The interstellar medium, the vast space between stars, is a cosmic laboratory where gas and dust undergo complex chemical reactions. Elisabeth Gruber is recreating these extreme conditions in the laboratory: Atoms and molecules are captured in ultracold helium clusters to investigate their interactions in a controlled environment. Using state-of-the-art technology, Gruber analyzes the resulting molecules and ions as well as their reaction pathways, gaining insights into the chemical complexity of the universe.





Lisa Isola University of Vienna

Revisiting private law from a historical-comparative perspective

The Austrian Civil Code (ABGB) of 1811 is one of the two longest-serving civil law codifications in the world (the second being the French Code Civil). The results of very thorough comparative legal work, which took into account different legal traditions within the Habsburg Empire, revealed that about a third of its provisions still correspond to the original version. Lisa Isola's project explores the origins of these regulations and shows how they have changed as a result of later influences.

András Kraft

Webster Vienna Private University

Apocalypse rescripted: Unraveling the maze of Byzantine apocalyptic literature

András Kraft's project will conduct the first comprehensive analysis of apocalyptic literature from the Byzantine millennium (c. 500-1500 CE). He and his team are analyzing 40 Byzantine texts in Greek, Armenian, and Slavonic varieties. Using digital methods and a multidisciplinary approach, the project goes beyond the fragmented study of individual texts and motifs, conducting a holistic analysis of and creating a new perspective on the diverse culture of Byzantine apocalypse culture.



Megan Lambert

University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

Unlocking animals' innovative responses to change

In her project, Megan Lambert is investigating when and how birds innovate, i.e., how they find new solutions to unknown challenges. Focusing on the kea parrot and the striated caracara, she and her team are exploring which traits support innovation, when innovations are likely to arise under natural conditions, and how these new behaviors spread. Understanding these processes is important for revealing how cognition shapes animals' responses to environmental change and how we can best support their conservation.



FWF ASTRA Award Winners

2025



Angelika Manhart University of Vienna

Unraveling the secrets of cell coordination

What happens when cells move as a group? Why are cancer cell clusters more successful at metastasizing than single cells? Angelika Manhart is investigating the mechanisms of cell coordination in her interdisciplinary project. She is combining mathematical modeling and simulation with experiments to explore how cell properties, their environment, and cell-to-cell communication shape collective behavior, with a focus on how cancer spreads. The project aims to uncover why moving as a team might give cells a crucial advantage.

Anne Miller

Medical University of Vienna

Exploring the spatial architecture of biochemical reactions

To function properly, cells must distribute their biochemical reactions across different areas. Textbooks describe mitochondria as the “powerhouse” of the cell and the nucleus as a metabolically inactive genetic center. Biochemist Anne Miller and her team are challenging this widely held view. She is investigating whether metabolic reactions also occur within the nucleus and may influence key cellular decisions. Using liver regeneration as a model, the team is exploring active metabolic pathways and developing methods to visualize these processes. Their work has the potential to reshape our understanding of the cellular metabolism.



Gerben Oling TU Wien

Exploring beyond the horizon of black holes

What happens when you fall into a black hole? Black holes are described in Einstein’s theory of relativity, which combines space and time into what we call “spacetime.” Beyond the event horizon, from which not even light can escape, researchers suspect extreme distortions of spacetime. In his project, Gerben Oling is using new geometric techniques to understand Einstein’s theory in this challenging area.

He will also connect these questions to the holographic principle, which will allow him to investigate questions about black holes in the conceptual framework of quantum mechanics.



FWF ASTRA Award Winners 2025



Bojana Radovanović University of Graz

Exploring hidden religious traditions in Southeast Europe

In her project, Bojana Radovanović is exploring lesser-known religious traditions in Southeast Europe, especially the areas where faith, folklore, and history overlap.

The focus is on traces of heresy, pre-Christian beliefs, and gendered ritual practices. Using a cross-disciplinary approach, she is connecting local religious dynamics to wider European and global contexts. The aim is to bridge linguistic, academic, and conceptual divides between Eastern and Western Europe, contributing to a more integrated understanding of the region's shared cultural heritage.

Silvia Ramundo

GMI – Gregor Mendel Institute of Molecular Plant Biology
of the Austrian Academy of Sciences

Discovering the silent signals that keep plants green

Billions of years ago, a tiny bacterium that could use sunlight for energy was swallowed by another cell, remaining in existence as a chloroplast. This alliance gave rise to the green algae and plants that characterize our ecosystems today. But chloroplasts live in a delicate balance: Too much sunlight can damage them, causing them to send molecular distress signals to their host cell. Silvia Ramundo and her team are decoding these signals in order to understand how cells react to them – and to help protect life on our planet.



Daniele Semola University of Vienna

**Expanding the mathematical foundations
for analyzing large networks**

The Ricci curvature is a way of measuring the distortion of a space from a flat surface and is ubiquitous in mathematics and the natural sciences. Despite being measured locally, it provides global information on the shape of an observed space. The goal of Daniele Semola's project is to address some of the long-standing unanswered questions on the Ricci curvature and to improve our understanding of the behavior of spaces whose curvature is bounded from below as well as the geometrical structures they are based on.





Megan Sørensen University of Vienna
Understanding how microbial partnerships have shaped evolution

Organisms often form tightly integrated partnerships, which have been critical in the evolution of life and continue to play important roles in ecosystems. In her project, Megan Sørensen seeks to uncover how these vital partnerships evolved. To do so, her team is analyzing microbial partnerships at critical tipping points along the evolutionary process – from molecular integration in individual cells to observations in nature. The aim is to help uncover fundamental evolutionary processes that have shaped, and continue to shape, life on earth.

Dagmar Vorlíček

University of Vienna

Exploring overlooked histories of security innovations

In her project, social scientist Dagmar Vorlíček explores how expertise inherited from the past can be adapted for changing political and security conditions. The project is investigating different pathways of reinventing expertise from the Cold War until today – for example in science diplomacy in Austria, biodefence in Czechia, and cybernetics in Estonia. Using innovative methods, this work will help us understand how security politics shape scientific research, and vice versa. By doing so, it will provide insights into overlooked legacies from the past and pave the way for exploring innovative ways to address new and emerging security threats.



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Michael Wallner TU Wien

Understanding the behavior of large mathematical structures

Discrete mathematical structures can be found everywhere – from networks in computer science to phylogenetic trees in biology. Often, however, we cannot even count them. Mathematician Michael Wallner is exploring the challenges in recursive counting problems of discrete structures and investigating universal patterns that depend on only a few global properties. The aim is to develop a unified theory of these phenomena using methods from combinatorics, complex analysis, and probability theory.

Excellence Initiative Sets New Standards

Cutting-edge research is an expedition into the future. The excellent=austria initiative supports teams of researchers at many different research institutions on their journeys to new discoveries in promising research fields.



CLUSTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Quantum Science Austria

Unraveling the mysteries of the quantum world

Knowledge in Crisis

New approaches to knowledge in the 21st century

Materials for Energy Conversion and Storage

Discovering new materials for an emission-free future

Microbiomes Drive Planetary Health

Discovering how microbiomes influence planetary health

EurAsian Transformations

Exploring the cultural heritage of Eurasia

Bilateral Artificial Intelligence

Discovering the next dimension of AI

Metabolic Control of Aging and Disease

New strategies for healthy aging

Neuronal Circuits in Health and Disease

Unlocking the secrets of the brain

Circular Bioengineering

Making material cycles sustainable

Resilience and Malleability of the Social Metabolism

Making global supply chains crisis-proof and sustainable

A New Geometry for Einstein's Theory of Relativity & Beyond

Re-measuring space and time

Brain Resilience

Strengthening the brain's resilience

Crucial Steps in Evolution: The Rise of Genome Architecture

Exploring the origins of complex life

Devising Advanced TCR-T Cells to Eradicate OsteoSarcoma

Customized immune cells for cancer therapy

Comparative Ecological Innovation Styles

How bodies and the environment give rise to inventions – from animals to robots

GEMINI: Germline Illuminated by Cellular Structural Biology

Understanding the immortality of the germline

TSxS – Diversabilities for Art and Design

Diverse abilities. New foundations.

Uncovering the Axioms of Mathematics

Translating the Ribosome Code of Pediatric Cancers

Researching fundamentals and therapies to treat childhood cancer

Marine Micro/Nanoplastics: Emission, Fate and Health Impacts

Tracking down plastic dust

EMERGING FIELDS

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In 2023, Austria launched excellent=austria, one of the largest funding initiatives in the country's scientific history – an important step toward strengthening excellence in basic research and making Austria more internationally visible and competitive as a research location. There are now nine Clusters of Excellence with over 1,000 researchers working closely together in 18 locations in critical areas of basic research, pooling their expertise from a wide range of disciplines and institutions to advance basic research on key topics.

At the same time, eleven Emerging Fields create opportunities for particularly high-risk but potentially groundbreaking research with high innovation potential.

Together with the participating research institutions, the FWF is investing a total of around €325 million in the excellent=austria initiative, creating new standards for quality, cooperation, and innovation in Austrian research. The excellent=austria program is a driving force for scientific progress, social innovation, and Austria's future.



excellent = austria

University of Innsbruck (coordination), Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austrian Academy of Sciences, TU Wien, University of Vienna

Central European University (coordination), Paris Lodron University Salzburg, University of Graz, University of Vienna

TU Wien (coordination), Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), University of Innsbruck, University of Vienna

University of Vienna (coordination), AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, CeMM – Research Center for Molecular Medicine of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), Johannes Kepler University Linz, Medical University of Graz, Medical University of Vienna, TU Wien

Austrian Academy of Sciences (coordination), Central European University, University of Innsbruck, University of Vienna

Johannes Kepler University Linz (coordination), Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), Graz University of Technology, TU Wien, University of Klagenfurt, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business

University of Graz (coordination), Medical University of Graz, Medical University of Vienna

Medical University of Vienna (coordination), IMBA – Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), Medical University of Innsbruck, University of Vienna

BOKU University (coordination), Graz University of Technology, TU Wien, University of Graz, University of Vienna

BOKU University (coordination), Central European University, Complexity Science Hub Vienna, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), University of Vienna, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business

University of Vienna (coordination)

Medical University of Vienna (coordination), CeMM – Research Center for Molecular Medicine of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, IMBA – Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA)

GMI – Gregor Mendel Institute of Molecular Plant Biology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (coordination), Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), University of Vienna

Research Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP) (coordination), BOKU University, Medical University of Innsbruck, Medical University of Vienna, St. Anna Children's Cancer Research Institute

University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (coordination), University of Innsbruck, University of Vienna

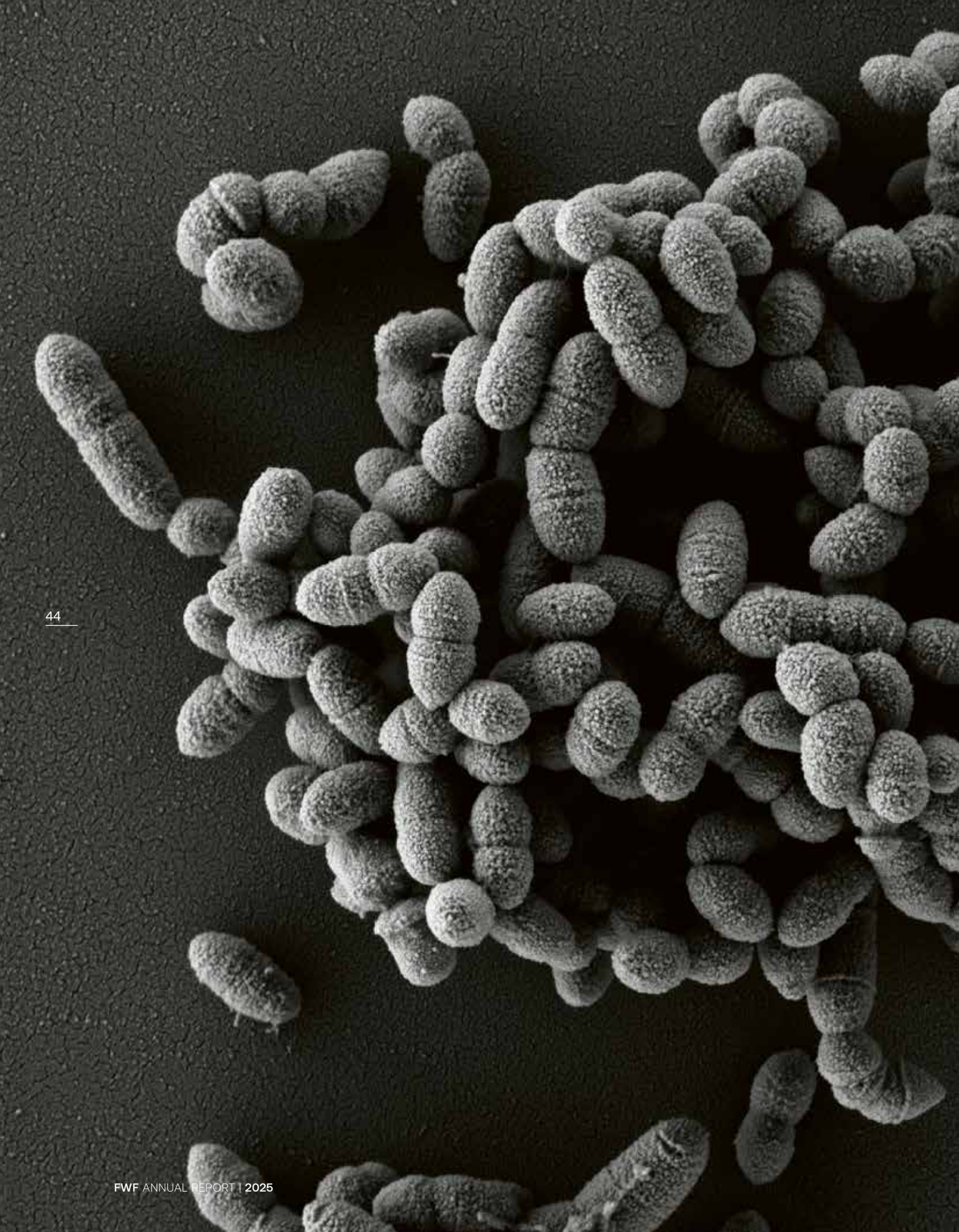
Research Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP) (coordination), IMBA – Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA)

University of Arts Linz (coordination), TU Wien

TU Wien (coordination), University of Vienna

Medical University of Vienna (coordination), St. Anna Children's Cancer Research Institute, University of Vienna, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna

BOKU University (coordination), TU Wien, University of Vienna





NEW SPECIES DISCOVERED IN THE HUMAN INTESTINE

Archaea are among the planet's oldest life forms. Alongside bacteria and eukaryotes such as animals, plants, and fungi, they are an independent domain of organisms. Originally, they were mainly discovered in extreme habitats such as hot springs, but it is now clear that they are much more prevalent: They also colonize the human body, especially the intestines. The gut microbiome – a community of trillions of microorganisms – has a significant influence on our physical and mental health.

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How exactly these interactions work is the subject of intensive research.

In 2025, scientists at the Medical University of Graz took an important step: They identified a previously unknown methane-producing archaea species from the human intestine, *Methanobrevibacter intestini*.

The new species differs both genetically and physiologically from known species. It grows exclusively under strictly anaerobic conditions, produces methane and surprisingly large quantities of succinate, a metabolic product that is linked to, among other things, inflammatory processes in the body.

“Our discovery is one more puzzle piece in understanding the microbiome,” says Christine Moissl-Eichinger. Archaea have long been underestimated but could play a key role in intestinal function and the progression of certain diseases.

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Events



Science in the Spotlight

The FWF's Austrian Science Awards honor scientific achievements and turn the spotlight on the researchers who are shaping the future of Austria's basic research. On June 25, the arcaded courtyard of Vienna City Hall was transformed into a forum of scientific excellence – an evening that emphasized that curiosity is the best driving force for innovation.



The FWF event honored top-notch international research, including the new FWF ASTRA Awards, which were presented for the first time this year. The evening's award winners impressively demonstrated the extent of Austria's exciting, diverse, and socially relevant cutting-edge research.

❶ Kicking off the event, Federal Minister Eva-Maria Holzleitner, Vienna City Councillor Veronica Kaup-Hasler, FWF President Christof Gattringer, and FWF Vice-President Ursula Jakubek discussed the importance of freedom of research, Vienna's role as a science location, and the social responsibility of innovative research. Lisa Gadenstätter, a presenter for Austria's national public broadcaster ORF, hosted the program.

❷ The FWF ASTRA Awards were then presented to 18 researchers. Their work covers a broad spectrum, from the analysis of complex networks and historical security research to the molecular signals that keep plants green.

❸ The impact that research can have beyond academia was addressed by WIFO Director Gabriel Felbermayr, who presented the results of a study published by WIFO, IHS, and Joanneum Research in 2024: Basic research has a faster and more long-lasting impact on the economy and society than previously assumed.

❹ Up-and-coming researchers like neuroscientist Nicole Amberg (Medical University of Vienna) and mathematician Juan P. Aguilera (TU Wien) gave insights into their work and explained why Vienna is an ideal place for their research careers.

❺ The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the 2025 FWF Wittgenstein Award winner, Elly Tanaka from the IMBA – Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The biochemist was honored for her internationally pioneering research into the regeneration of complex body structures. Minister of Science Holzleitner, FWF President Gattringer, and FWF Vice-President Jakubek presented Austria's most prestigious and most highly endowed research award.

❻ Guests lingered long after the official presentation of the awards: The early-summer evening in the arcaded courtyard was ideal for conversations, networking, and exchanging ideas with the award-winning researchers.

Around 500 guests, including researchers, government representatives, and members of the general public, joined the FWF to celebrate outstanding scientific achievements.



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The Future of Basic Research

The second edition of the Think Beyond Summit held on February 20, 2025, focused on key questions for the future of Austria and Europe as a research location, such as how to attract top researchers, academic freedom, and opportunities for international networking.



Recordings of the Think Beyond Summit talks

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Can We Afford to Lose Them? The Need to Attract Top Researchers

Moderated by Christof Gattringer, the first panel featured Robbert Dijkgraaf, physicist and former Minister of Science of the Netherlands (Dijkgraaf also gave the introductory keynote), Stefanie J. Ellis, microbiologist and research group leader at Max Perutz Labs, Sabine Herlitschka, CEO of Infineon Technologies Austria AG, Martin Hetzer, molecular biologist and president of the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), and Henrike Hartmann, Deputy Secretary General of the Volkswagen Foundation. Panel participants discussed the question: How can we attract top researchers?

From left to right: Martin Hetzer (ISTA), Henrike Hartmann (Volkswagen Foundation), Robbert Dijkgraaf (former Dutch Minister of Science), Stefanie J. Ellis (Max Perutz Labs), Sabine Herlitschka (Infineon), and Christof Gattringer (FWF, moderator) during the panel discussion.



From left to right: Markus Aspelmeyer (IQOQI), Katalin Farkas (CEU), Manuel Heitor (former Portuguese Minister of Science), Barbara Weitgruber (BMFWF), Jens Jungblut (University of Oslo), and Birgit Dalheimer (ORF, moderator) at the panel discussion.

Defining the Limits of Freedom and Autonomy in Research

The second panel, moderated by ORF science editor Birgit Dalheimer, consisted of: Manuel Heitor, Head of the Horizon Europe expert group and former Minister of Science of Portugal, Katalin Farkas, philosopher at Central European University and member of the Cluster of Excellence “Knowledge in Crisis,” Barbara Weitgruber, head of the Scientific Research and International Affairs, Gender Equality and Diversity Management section at the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research, Jens Jungblut, Professor of Political Science at the University of Oslo, and Markus Aspelmeyer, quantum physicist at the University of Vienna and Scientific Director of the Institute of Quantum Optics and Quantum Information of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

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Former Schrödinger fellows cut a cake together with the FWF to celebrate one of the greatest success stories in Austrian research funding. From left to right: Barbara Zimmermann (FWF), Birgit Hofreiter (TU Wien), Ursula Jakubek and Christof Gatttringer (FWF), Renée Schroeder (FWF Wittgenstein Award winner), Birgit Dalheimer (moderator), Kurt Kotrschal, Alice Vadrot (University of Vienna), and Ruth Ladenstein (St. Anna Children's Cancer Research Institute).

Reception & networking: “40 Years of Mobility in Research – an Evening with Alumni of the Erwin Schrödinger Program”

To mark the 40th anniversary of the Schrödinger fellowship program, the FWF invited Schrödinger alumni – whose career paths have led many to the top of their fields, as well as to leading positions in business and industry – to an event focused on networking and sharing experiences.

Other FWF Events



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FWF Women's Circle: Financial self-determination starts with knowledge – and courage

The third edition of the FWF Women's Circle focused on the gender finance gap and its consequences: Experts from science and the business community discussed outdated gender roles when dealing with money and the importance of financial literacy for a self-determined life.

A panel of prominent guests opened the event at the Otto Wagner Postsparkasse: Bettina Fuhrmann (WU Vienna), Monika Rosen (finance expert), Gertrude Schatzdorfer-Wölfl (Schatzdorfer GmbH), Maria Rauch-Kallat (management consultant, former Minister for Women), moderator Ursula Jakubek (FWF), and further participants discussed structural barriers to financial equality and solutions for closing the gender finance gap.

Women are less likely to invest, although they are often more successful at it. Over the course of their lives, they earn less, work part-time more often, and their careers are interrupted more frequently. As a result,

many women have less financial security and are more at risk of poverty, especially in old age. Uncertainty, fear of losses, and a lack of confidence in one's own financial literacy all play a role.

The discussion showed how important it is to start with financial education early in life. Learning to manage money at an early age makes it easier to plan more independently and make better provisions for later in life. Individual bank accounts, conscious investment choices, and sustainable and ethical investments were named as important steps. Banks and financial institutions are also increasingly promoting the advancement of women – not least because mixed teams work more successfully.

The discussion concluded with a clear appeal: Even stronger political measures are needed, such as automatic pension splitting and greater awareness of the importance of financial literacy on all social levels.



ESPRIT/Richter event: Effective career funding – more and more women in Austria’s scientific community

The FWF’s ESPRIT and Elise Richter career programs were created specifically to support women interested in a career in top-level scientific research. At a ceremony in Vienna, Minister of Science Eva-Maria Holzleitner, FWF President Christof Gattringer, and Vice-President Ursula Jakubek recognized the achievements of the award-winning female researchers – setting a bold example for equal opportunities and excellence.

The FWF currently funds more than 2,500 women researchers. Gender equality initiatives, networking opportunities, and new initiatives such as a tenure package for women help create sustainable structures for fair career development. This makes these programs a key driver for diversity, visibility, and equality in Austrian research, making cutting-edge research more accessible to women, more diverse, and more sustainable.



Art meets science – Austria’s successful Arts-Based Research program turns 15

For 15 years, the FWF has been strengthening artistic research with its Arts-Based Research program. This field is becoming increasingly important in Austrian science. A panel discussion organized to

celebrate the 15th anniversary of this FWF funding program in Vienna made it clear that new forms of thinking will be needed to solve the complex issues of our time. Art can provide just the impulses needed for this paradigm shift. The Arts-Based Research program funds interdisciplinary projects applying artistic-scientific methods to research topics such as biodesign, body image, or social taboos.

The program is internationally recognized as a groundbreaking model that boosts Austria’s profile as a research location and encourages innovative ways of generating knowledge. Around 130 funded projects to date demonstrate arts-based research’s capacity for producing new findings and creative methods and highlighting socially relevant perspectives.

FWF @ Technology Talks: Bringing excellence and research together

How can we attract the best minds in science and research and retain them in the long term? At the FWF workshop at the Technology Talks Austria, ERC President Maria Leptin, Manuela Baccarini, Vice-Rector of the University of Vienna, Georg Winter from AITHYRA, and FWF START Award winner Juan Pablo Aguilera, TU Wien, discussed what Europe can do to survive in the global competition for talent. The key message: Early-stage researchers need independence, transparent career paths, and an inspiring environment.



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Listen to the discussion
moderated by FWF President
Christof Gattringer here *(in German)*.



Science Lectures: New insights, first-hand

Get first-hand knowledge, ask questions, and discuss them in small groups – not in a large auditorium but in a more intimate setting, and in easy-to-understand language. This is what the Science Lectures are all about. The FWF's cooperation with Vienna's adult education centers (VHS) is part of the VHS Science program and features lectures by FWF-funded top researchers. Held on numerous evenings at a variety of VHS locations throughout the city, these low-threshold events inspire dialog and bring the latest findings from cutting-edge research directly to people's neighborhoods in an understandable and entertaining way. This makes science tangible and brings it close to the public at large.

The lectures cover topics ranging from quantum physics and new medical findings to fascinating everyday issues that researchers are currently working on.



First-hand knowledge from FWF-funded top researchers on numerous evenings at several VHS locations (Please note: Science Lectures are held in German.)

Come on in! Science on Stage

The series of science talks “Am Puls” inspires conversations between researchers and the public. At venues like the cabaret venue Kabarett Simpl in Vienna or the Orpheum theater in Graz, FWF-funded researchers take the stage to talk with experts from the field about socially relevant topics. The audience is actively involved in the discussion.



From stress to strength – Strategies for well-being and serenity

Stress researcher Bence Szaszko spoke with journalist Gabriele Kuhn and journalist and comedian Michael Hufnagl about what causes stress and how we can deal with it better. Their conversation combined research with personal experiences and showed how constant availability puts a strain on both our professional and private lives. They also talked about the consequences of chronic stress and ways to achieve greater resilience.



The rhythm of life – keeping our heart healthy

Molecular biologist and cardioimmunologist Susanne Sattler and sports cardiologist Jürgen Scharhag talked about our hearts and how we can keep them healthy. They explained how reliably the heart works, how sensitively it reacts to stress, emotions, and lifestyle factors, and what happens if it gets out of sync. The focus was on new findings from research and medicine as well as ways to strengthen heart health with exercise and by making healthy choices.



The sun, the universe, and us

Solar physicist Astrid Veronig and science communicator and teacher Norbert Siller discussed the sun and the universe. They explained how the sun affects our life on Earth, from heat to light to the northern lights, and what forces are at work within it. The conversation also touched on the huge, mysterious universe with its billions of stars, black holes, and unexplored phenomena, as well as the big questions: How was the universe created, how long will the sun shine, and where does our knowledge end?



New Work – the new world of work

Anna Nowshad from Deloitte Consulting and occupational psychologist Christian Korunka discussed how globalization and digitalization are changing the way we work. The lines between work and private life are becoming blurred, finding meaning in life is becoming more important than having a career, and flat hierarchies, working from home, and flexible working hours are shaping everyday life. At the same time, the pressure to perform is increasing, making mental health and work-life balance crucial. The future of work needs technological innovation and new ways of sustainable, healthy working.



Fasting as a fountain of youth: A new start for body and mind?

Aneta Pissareva, medical fasting instructor, and Thomas Pieber, endocrinologist, explained why fasting is so beneficial. It activates autophagy: Cells recycle themselves, break down old waste, and generate new energy – like an internal spring cleaning. Fasting promotes health and well-being and can increase longevity. The experts discussed fasting methods, what happens in the fasting body, and the scientific findings behind this both ancient and current approach to health.



Please note: Recordings of “Am Puls” are in German.



“Every scientific discipline should be viewed in a philosophical context.”

Biochemist **Renée Schroeder** worked in scientific research and teaching for over 40 years. She has received numerous awards, including the FWF Wittgenstein Award. Today, Schroeder is involved in the study, extraction, and processing of medicinal herbs at the Leierhof farm in Salzburg.



German-born **Dirk Stermann** is one of Austria's best-known comedians and has been half of the famous duo “Stermann & Grisseemann” with Christoph Grisseemann since the 1990s. He is the author of several novels and will be on stage in 2026 with his second solo program “20 Spritzer bis Amstetten” (20 wine spritzers until Amstetten).

“We are in a revolution of stupidity.”

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Was die Welt zusammenhält

Until recently, **Gertrude Schatzdorfer-Wölfel** ran the family business Schatzdorfer GmbH. She was named Manager of the Year for her innovative and sustainable personnel management. Her book “*Nachfolge gestalten – Chancen und Herausforderungen in Familienunternehmen*” (Shaping succession – opportunities and challenges in family companies) was published in 2025.



“We can only succeed if we focus on our strengths.”



Sabine Seidler was the first woman to hold a professorship at TU Wien and took over as Rector of the university in 2011, a position she held until 2023. She was President of Universities Austria (uniko) and is STEM Commissioner of the City of Vienna and Chairwoman of the Board of the FWF's alpha+ Foundation.

“We have to find our own solutions.”



"We have a strong parliament and a strong judicial system."

Susanne Kalss is Head of the Institute for Business Law at WU Vienna University of Economics and Business. She specializes in corporate, capital market, and business law. Kalss is a sought-after expert on the governance of large companies and a FWF START Award winner.

Armin Wolf has presented the news program "ZIB 2" for Austria's public broadcasting company ORF since 2002 and has been its main presenter since 2007. From 2010, he helped set up ZIB's social media channels. He regularly gives lectures on politics, journalism, and social media, has published several books, and has received numerous awards.



"Journalism's job is to get as close to the truth as possible."

The discussion series *"Was die Welt zusammenhält"* is held in cooperation with the ORF-RadioKulturhaus and the radio station Ö1. Please note: *"Was die Welt zusammenhält"* discussions are in German.



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"We are working in a large research network to build better AI systems."

Computer scientist **Martina Seidl** is a professor at the Johannes Kepler University Linz, where she heads the Institute for Symbolic Artificial Intelligence, and a member of the FWF Cluster of Excellence "Bilateral Artificial Intelligence." This research network is doing pioneering work in the field of artificial intelligence by combining machine learning with explainable AI.

Martin Kocher was Scientific Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) and served as Austria's Federal Minister of Economics and Labor until 2025. The economist and economic researcher has been Governor of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (OeNB) in Vienna since fall 2025.



"If you compare patents per capita, Europe is on a par with the USA."

RANDOM FIND: LETTERS FROM W. H. AUDEN TO HIS VIENNESE LOVER

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RAVENNA
S. Apollinare Nuovo - I Re Magi
(Mosaico VI secolo)
St. Apollinare Neuf - Les Trois Rois Magi
(Mosaïque du VI s.)
New St. Apollinare - The Three Wise Men
(Mosaic of the VI cent.)
Neu St. Apollinare - Die Hi. Drei Könige
(Mosaik des VI Jhdts.)

MIT LUFTPOST
PAR AVION



[Handwritten letter in German, written in blue ink. The text is mostly illegible due to the angle and handwriting, but appears to be a personal letter.]

Hen
Hugo



W. H. Auden is considered one of the 20th century's most important poets. Looking to get away from the hustle and bustle of New York City, Auden found a retreat in Kirchstetten, Lower Austria. Starting in the 1950s, he liked to spend his summers in the small town and wrote large parts of his later work there.

In 2023, around 100 previously unknown letters and postcards from the British-American poet were found. The correspondence is addressed to his lover, friend, and confidant "Hugerl," a Viennese callboy from the working-class milieu, who earned his way with occasional burglaries and sex work.

The cache of letters was discovered by chance, after Hugo was mentioned briefly in an ORF program on the 50th anniversary of Auden's death. After the program was broadcast, a woman came forward who was in possession of the letters as the sole heir of Hugo Kurka – his full name. Since 2025, the correspondence has been digitalized and analyzed at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

"The ten-year correspondence shows a surprisingly close, respectful relationship between equals and provides insights into some very personal aspects of the world-famous poet," says project head Sandra Mayer from the Austrian Academy of Sciences. At the same time, the discovery sheds new light on queer life in post-war Austria, when homosexuality was still a punishable offense.

Activities

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Funding Portfolio



excellent=austria

Clusters of Excellence

Cutting-edge research is an expedition into the future. Clusters of Excellence funding supports large teams on their journeys to new discoveries in promising research fields. The program gives outstanding researchers the opportunity to strengthen long-term collaborations across regional, thematic, and institutional borders. Clusters of Excellence are characterized by a combination of cutting-edge research, research-led education, and the promotion of young researchers.

Emerging Fields

The Emerging Fields program is aimed at teams of outstanding researchers who are doing pioneering work in basic research and are prepared to depart from established approaches. It gives researchers the opportunity to pursue particularly high-risk ideas. The program focuses on funding research that has the potential to trigger a paradigm shift in its field, resulting in disruptive innovation.



Projects

Principal Investigator Projects

Maximum flexibility and the freedom to implement pioneering projects in all disciplines of basic research – the FWF's Principal Investigator Project funding offers researchers a thematically open funding program that covers a wide range of individual requirements. It provides principal investigators and their research groups with the resources they need to investigate key research questions over a period of several years.

Principal Investigator Projects International

Maximum flexibility and the freedom to implement pioneering projects in all disciplines of basic research, working closely with project partners abroad – the FWF's Principal Investigator Projects International program offers researchers a largely thematically open funding opportunity covering a wide range of individual requirements. It provides principal investigators and their research groups with the resources they need to work together with international project partners to investigate key research questions over a period of several years.

Clinical Research

Gaining new scientific knowledge to improve clinical practice, therapy concepts, and treatment methods – the Clinical Research funding program offers researchers and clinicians the opportunity to conduct clinical studies without being dependent on commercial interests.

1000 Ideas

Basic research means breaking new ground. Sometimes it's the most unconventional approaches that lead to pioneering innovations. The 1000 Ideas program funds completely new, high-risk, or particularly original research ideas that go beyond our current scientific understanding. The focus is on seed funding for forward-looking topics that have high transformative potential for science and research.

Arts-Based Research

Merging artistic and scientific perspectives, pushing the boundaries of conventional thought – the funding program Arts-Based Research (PEEK), which is exemplary in Europe, funds innovative research in the arts. Artistic experience and methodology play a key role in the projects, and national or international research partners can be added easily.

FWF Wittgenstein Award

With nominees named by the scientific community, winners selected by an international jury of experts, and a €2 million endowment that exceeds all other individual funding awards in Austria, the FWF Wittgenstein Award is unique in every respect. With this award, the FWF not only honors exceptional academic careers but also offers researchers the resources they need to advance their own research work at the highest international level.



Careers

ESPRIT

The ESPRIT program (Early-Stage Program: Research – Innovation – Training) is intended to improve the skills and support the professional development of researchers from all disciplines early in their research careers by giving them the opportunity to lead an independent research project.

FWF ASTRA Awards

Attracting and retaining particularly talented researchers in international competition: The FWF launched a new career funding program called the FWF ASTRA Awards in July 2024 for this very purpose. This funding helps advanced postdocs in Austria make the leap to the top of their research field.

Erwin Schrödinger

Expanding your research profile in a new environment of excellence is essential for sustainable professional development. One key to success is mobility: The Erwin Schrödinger program gives highly qualified postdocs the opportunity to pursue career-enhancing stays at internationally renowned research institutions and also provides them with support after their return to Austria.

doc.funds

Attractive career opportunities for doctoral students help them gain a foothold in promising research fields. To this end, doc.funds grants strengthen doctoral training programs in Austria. The program facilitates scientific or arts-based education and training for doctoral students in existing structured doctoral programs. It helps universities sustainably reinforce their educational and training programs in the long term and provide junior researchers with excellent working conditions.

doc.funds.connect

Attractive career opportunities for doctoral students help them gain a foothold in promising research fields. To achieve this goal, doc.funds.connect grants fund joint doctoral training programs at universities and universities of applied sciences. The program facilitates cooperation between institutions, strengthens the research competence of universities of applied sciences, and offers doctoral students additional opportunities for career development.

Funding Portfolio



Collaborations

Specialized Research Groups

Pooling expertise and strengthening collaborations – the highly endowed yet flexible and adaptable Specialized Research Groups allow both small and large teams to conduct collaborative research projects at Austria's research institutions.

International – Multilateral Initiatives

More international cooperation in cutting-edge research – this FWF program offers researchers custom-tailored support to allow them to carry out multilateral research projects. The FWF is represented in numerous multinational consortia of funding organizations that enable researchers to carry out multilateral cooperation projects across national borders.

#ConnectingMinds

With the #ConnectingMinds program, the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) encourages researchers to involve non-academic stakeholders in their research projects. Funding is available to teams that combine both academic and social knowledge and are applying them to help tackle social, technological, ecological, and economic challenges. The focus is on transdisciplinarity, innovative research approaches, and support for community engagement and collective learning spaces.

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Communication

Top Citizen Science

Research for you and me – the Top Citizen Science program is aimed at researchers who actively involve citizens in the research process. Whether collecting data, sharing observations, or contributing experiences – there are no limits to the ways citizens can participate, and partners such as schools or clubs can also be involved.

Science Communication

Helping people understand and experience science, and more importantly, inspiring the next generation to get involved – that is the goal of science communication. This program supports scientists in communicating their FWF-funded research work to various target groups through new, creative communication measures. The aim is to make research and its results visible and to strengthen the public's trust in science.

Book Publications

This program funds the publication and simultaneous open-access publication of books on research findings.

Digital Publications

This program funds the publication of research results in stand-alone digital formats.

Open-Access Block Grant

Since January 1, 2024, costs for the open-access publishing of work (peer-reviewed journal articles, contributions to edited volumes, etc.) resulting in whole or in part from FWF-funded projects are supported by means of an Open-Access Block Grant provided in addition to the approved project budget.



International Collaborations

The FWF, in cooperation with partner countries, offers funding for closely integrated project collaborations.

Belgium/Flanders, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy/South Tyrol, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino



Subject-Specific Funding Programs

In addition to its thematically open programs, the FWF offers targeted funding opportunities for research on selected topics. Here is an overview of available subject-specific funding opportunities and multilateral international activities.

- AI Mission Austria
- Belmont Forum
- ERA-NET HERA
- ERA-NET NORFACE
- ERA-NET QuantERA
- Alternative Methods to Animal Testing
- European Partnership BE READY
- European Partnership Biodiversa+
- European Partnership BrainHealth
- European Partnership ERA4Health
- European Partnership ERDERA
- European Partnership EUPAHW
- European Partnership FutureFoodS
- European Partnership OHAMR
- European Partnership PerMed
- European Partnership Water4All
- Quantum Austria

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Privately Funded Research Grants

Since 2014, the FWF has been cooperating with non-profit foundations and organizations to open new doors for top researchers. Here is an overview of all privately funded research grants.

- Gottfried and Vera Weiss Award
- netidee SCIENCE
- Herzfelder Foundation Projects
- Rückenwind Funding Bonus
- WE&ME Award
- Zero Emissions Award

Funding is awarded according to transparent rules that pursue one single goal: to support researchers whose work meets high international standards and whose ideas push the boundaries of existing knowledge. Regardless of which program researchers apply to, in the end, all applications are decided upon by the FWF's Scientific Board based on international peer review.

Finding the right funding program

The FWF's funding opportunities give researchers from all areas of basic and arts-based research the opportunity to carry out innovative research projects. They provide the financial freedom needed to conduct independent research over a period of several years. Individual funding programs are based on the different needs within basic research, ranging from career programs and project funding to research projects in small or large teams or support for cross-institutional or international collaborations.

Applying for funding

A rapid funding decision depends on a convincing proposal; all funding applications must be based on the content and formal criteria of the respective program. This helps the FWF make sure that applications' relevant information, ranging from researchers' CVs to the project description, can be reviewed and compared against each other, keeping the awarding process fair and transparent. In order to offer all researchers equal opportunities from the outset, the FWF has implemented measures on equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion in all steps of the funding process.

International peer review

All of our funding decisions are based on international reviews from experts in their respective fields, ensuring that the selection process is based solely on the criteria of scientific excellence. The FWF obtains nearly 5,000 reviews per year from around 65 countries. Reviewers are selected solely on the recommendation of our Scientific Consultants, who have a high level of expertise in their respective fields.

The funding decision

The FWF treats all scientific and scholarly disciplines as well as arts-based research equally. To ensure fair competition, all individual programs have their own budgets. Proposals are evaluated only in comparison to equivalent applications. Funding decisions are made solely by the independent FWF Scientific Board, which is made up of the Scientific Consultants and the members of the FWF Executive Board. They have the task of deciding on each proposal based entirely on the reviews received. Ensuring impartiality among everyone involved in the decision-making process is very important to the FWF.

The Starting Block for Ideas

Every discovery starts with an idea. The FWF's job is to recognize the most promising approaches. But what are the steps on the path to successful funding? Here is an FWF user guide for researchers who want to discover what really matters.

Any questions?

Would you like to find out more about applying to the FWF? We look forward to welcoming you to one of our information events. Sign up here for one of the upcoming dates. The FWF consulting team is also happy to answer your questions by phone or email. Check the individual program information pages for contact details.

Informational events:



Carrying out the project

During the project phase, the FWF offers researchers and their teams the freedom they need to conduct independent research and even pursue unexpected directions. The funding is provided as a global budget that researchers are free to use under the general terms of the grant agreement as the project progresses.

Research integrity and research ethics are key elements of the research process. Compliance with the rules of good research practice and internationally established ethical standards are crucial for all projects. Where violations of these standards are suspected, a whistleblower system is in place to report concerns. It is also important to the FWF to help researchers implement their projects as sustainably as possible.

Closing the project

Be it publications, studies, or patents – research results are diverse and contribute to innovations in many areas of society. Numerous open science measures are available to help researchers make their scientific publications and research data freely accessible. The structured documentation of project results in a Final Project Report and a final financial statement mark the successful conclusion of an FWF project.



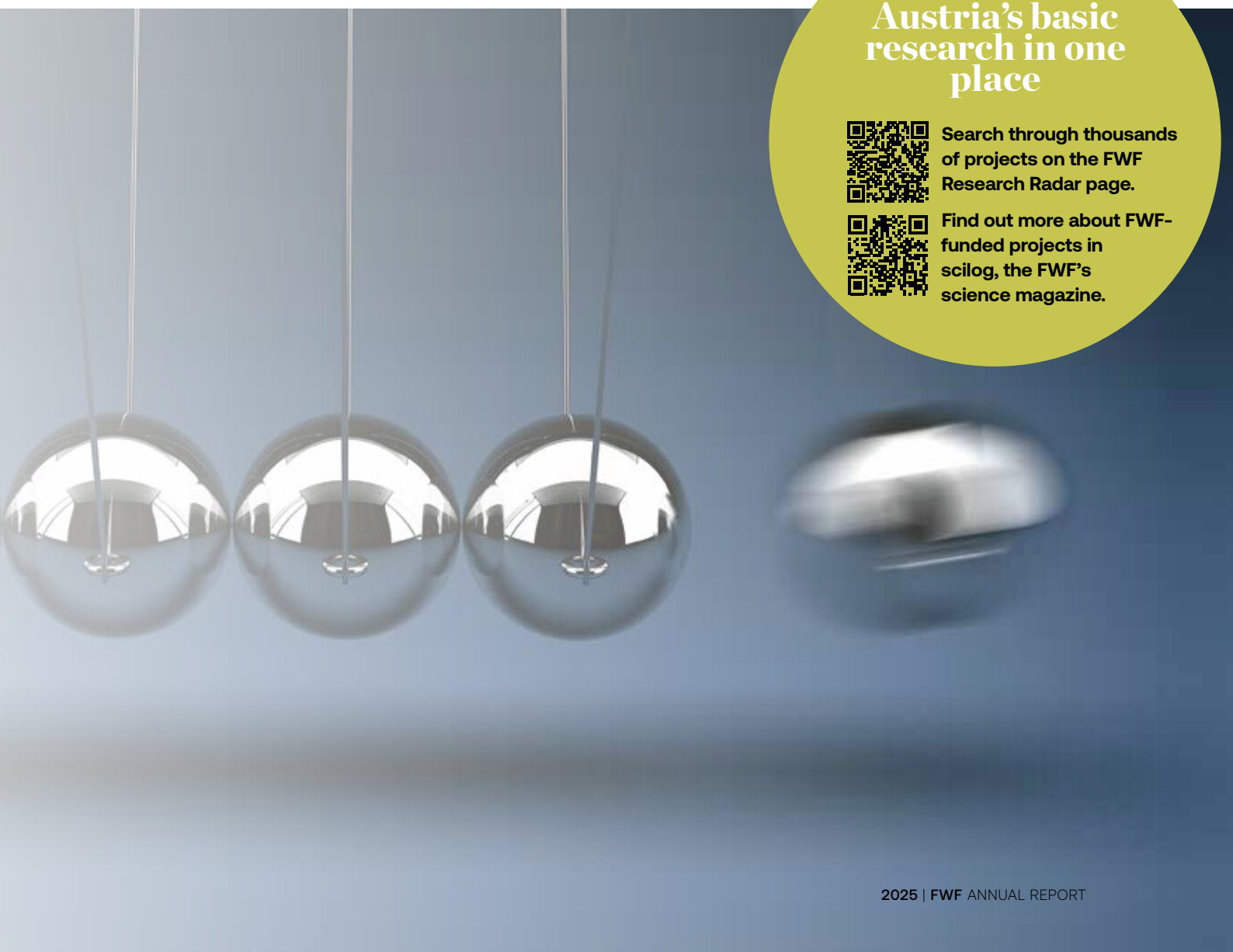
All of Austria's basic research in one place ⁶⁹



Search through thousands of projects on the FWF Research Radar page.



Find out more about FWF-funded projects in scilog, the FWF's science magazine.



How Early Setbacks Strengthen Research Careers

An international study has shown that early funding decisions shape academic careers – but not always as clearly as expected. Especially with regard to FWF funding, early setbacks can also lead to later success.

How important is early research funding for a researcher's scientific career?

The international consortium Research on Research Institute (RoRI) looked into this question. In a large-scale study, approximately 110,000 applications from six funding organizations in Europe and Canada were analyzed, including data from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

The study focused on two opposing effects: the so-called **Matthew effect**, in which early funding leads to long-term benefits, and the **early-career setback effect**, which describes how early failure can lead to improved performance later on.

The results show: Both are possible.

The early-career setback effect is particularly pronounced in FWF-funded and Austrian basic research projects. Researchers whose early applications are rejected by a narrow margin often remain active and are later successful. However, selection also plays a role here: The most high-performing researchers are the ones who don't give up.

At the same time, the Matthew effect is less notable at the FWF than at other funding organizations. Although early approval increases the chances of success later on, it has less of an automatic career-enhancing effect.

RoRI study
“The Matthew Effect and Early-Career Setbacks in Research Funding – A Replication Study”



Overall, the results indicate that acquiring FWF funding early in a researcher's career has less of an impact than the quality of the current proposal. This means that funding decisions are based more on the respective application, opening up avenues for future opportunities.

Research on Research Institute (RoRI)

RoRI is a consortium of 21 public and private research funding organizations and research institutions that work together to study how research is organized, evaluated, conducted, funded, and applied.

In the past, the FWF has participated in studies on the advancement of early-stage researchers, transdisciplinarity, randomization, and peer review. Currently, the FWF is involved in the following projects:

Funder Data Platform

Harmonization and provision of research funding data

META-MOMENT

Overview study on international activities in science studies

EFFORT

An evaluation of efforts to reduce grant bureaucracy

How Today's Curiosity Creates Tomorrow's Impact

How are new materials for the energy transition created? Why do cells react to stress, and what does this mean for diseases? And how do historical experiences shape our understanding of democracy today? FWF-funded projects show how basic research has an impact: through new findings, long-term innovations, and a deeper understanding of our world. Often everything starts with one unanswered question – and the insights gained can have an impact far beyond science.

What are the benefits of basic research? This question comes up again and again, especially when it comes to public funding. The answer is as diverse as research itself. As the main funding organization for basic research in Austria, the FWF supports researchers and projects whose impact is often not immediately visible but can have profound effects in the medium and long term. The key is to provide an optimal research environment.

Basic research is driven by curiosity. It asks fundamental questions: How does life work on a molecular level? What gives rise to social inequalities? What can historical sources tell us about the present? FWF-funded projects generate new knowledge without the need for immediate application. And this is precisely what makes them so important. After all, many of the great innovations of our time are based on findings that were not originally intended to serve a specific purpose.

The impact of this research can be seen on several levels. Scientifically, FWF projects contribute to the world's knowledge base. Independent output studies for Austria show that FWF-funded researchers publish more frequently in leading journals, maintain global networks, and make Austria more visible and attractive as a research location. At the same time, the FWF trains up-and-coming researchers: PhD students and postdocs gain experience, develop new methods, and pass on their

knowledge in university and non-university research institutions, companies, and public institutions.

But impact goes far beyond science. Socially relevant topics play a key role in many projects: climate change, health, digitalization, and social justice. The results influence public discourse, support evidence-based decisions, and help us better understand complex interrelationships.

Last but not least, basic research also has an economic impact. While this impact is often indirect, it is always lasting. New technologies, materials, or processes rarely emerge overnight – they grow from a solid foundation of knowledge that has been built up over years or decades. FWF-funded research provides precisely this foundation, creating the basis for future innovations and added value.

But the FWF's impact is not just measured in key statistics. It's more about long-term impact: insights that change attitudes, empower people, set off impulses that find their way into different areas of society. For the FWF, impact is not a buzzword but a process.

There's no doubt: FWF-funded basic research has an impact that is strong, diverse, and long-lasting. It broadens horizons, strengthens Austria as a science location, and contributes to a better understanding of the major issues of our time. Sometimes impact begins with a simple question. And ends with an effect that extends far beyond the lab or the archive.

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FWF Research Radar



The online platform provides easy access to the research output of all funded projects.

WIFO/IHS/JR study



"The Contribution of Basic Research Projects Funded by the Austrian Science Fund to Economic and Societal Impacts"

Impact Stories



Interested in innovation, new businesses, and start-ups? And in the people and their ideas that make them happen?

The FWF feels strongly that science can only develop its full potential if it is conceived and practiced across borders. For this reason, it offers researchers from Austria a wide range of opportunities for international cooperation. Whether in European networks, through global standards, or in intensive exchange with partner organizations – the FWF sees itself as a bridge builder in the global scientific community and funds collaborations that accelerate innovation and knowledge.

Overcoming Borders, Bundling Knowledge: International Collaboration as a Success Factor

International cooperation forms the basis for cutting-edge research and strengthens Austria's position in the global scientific community. Targeted measures encourage the integration of Austrian researchers into international networks and contribute to the further development of scientific standards on a global level.

In this endeavor, the FWF focuses particularly on international collaborations: Today, successful research is increasingly the result of cross-border collaborations, be it through specialized expertise, shared knowledge, or the joint use of research infrastructures.

International competition and cooperation are both equally important in this context. Around 75% of all current FWF projects already involve the cooperation of international partners – a clear indicator of the strength of Austria's global network.

The FWF plays a number of different roles:

Acting as a funding partner at the national level: Researchers are given the conditions they need to collaborate with international colleagues.



**At a research policy level:**

Working closely with the Austrian scientific community, the FWF is actively involved in further developing research and science on a global scale.

In shaping processes: The FWF's administrative processes are based on international best practice models, contributing to the harmonization of standards.

Several funding programs focus on bilateral and multilateral collaborations.

Thanks to intensive collaborations with partner organizations around the world, Austrian researchers have access to numerous funding opportunities, many of them in cooperation with leading research nations and as part of European partnerships and networks.

The FWF also offers calls with partner funding organizations in Europe and Asia for funding closely integrated research projects. As part of the Weave network, for example, the FWF funds bilateral and trilateral research projects with scientists from seven other countries. These formats allow researchers to pool resources, share expertise, and exploit synergies, which in turn accelerates research results and increases the international visibility of Austrian research. The FWF's participation in European Partnership calls is currently financed by the Fonds Zukunft Österreich (FZÖ).

The strength of the FWF's international network is also reflected in its active**participation in science policy initiatives and networks:**

Science Europe: Founded in 2011, the European umbrella organization unites 40 research funding organizations from 30 countries and promotes the development of the European Research Area. The FWF plays a leading role in the organization and is represented by experts in all relevant working groups. One key topic is the role of artificial intelligence in research funding.

Global Research Council (GRC):

This global network of research funding organizations is a forum for coordinating and further developing research policy at an international level. The FWF is an active member and contributes to the discourse on challenges and opportunities arising from the increasing globalization of science.

The funding of international projects is also reflected in the FWF's annual funding balance. In 2025 alone, projects worth around €60 million were approved in international programs, which is proof that international cooperation is more than just a goal: It is practiced in real life and is a strategic mainstay.

This international focus helps the FWF not only to build bridges between research institutions and countries but also to strengthen the competitiveness and innovative power of Austrian research in the long term. International funding and cooperation are essential for increasing the visibility of Austrian research and actively shaping its development in a global context.

Equality and Diversity

A number of activities and measures are in place at the FWF to create more equal opportunities and diversity in top-level research. The aim is to ensure a funding procedure in which researchers from different backgrounds can participate on an equal footing. In 2025, the emphasis was especially on the following activities.

Fixing the Knowledge:

The FWF's survey of the Austrian research community



The findings of a survey commissioned by the FWF (see page 76) provide important insights into researchers' working conditions as well as into the FWF's gender equality efforts, particularly with regard to job satisfaction, experiences of discrimination, and career prospects.

Despite an overall high level of job satisfaction, around half of all researchers are considering leaving their academic career. The main reasons for this are fixed-term employment contracts (which particularly affect women in general and employees under the age of 40), the problem of serial short-term contracts, and tenuous career development. Women of all ages are particularly critical of the work-life balance in research careers.

The majority of women surveyed (59%) are in favor of stronger quotas (for example with regard to discipline, gender, and age) when awarding jobs and funding, as opposed to only 28% of male respondents.

The survey also looked at experiences of discrimination: Around a third of those surveyed reported experiencing or observing discrimination in the workplace within the last 24 months. Women report experiencing and observing discrimination more frequently (35%) and women with non-Austrian citizenship even more frequently (37%), while only 19% of men state that they have experienced or observed discrimination.

"Gender/gender identity" is cited as the most common reason for discrimination, especially by women, followed by ethnic origin and age. Men most frequently report experiencing discrimination based on their age. Experiencing the combination of discrimination based on gender and age plays a greater role for older women and makes them doubt whether they should remain in academia.

Fixing the Numbers

- ▶ In 2025, **women accounted for** about 33% of all **funding approvals**.
- ▶ In the **natural sciences and technology**, the percentage of women was 22.4%, in the **humanities and social sciences** 38.5%, and in **biology and medicine** 41.7%.
- ▶ Of the 749 newly approved projects, one project is headed by a **non-binary individual**.
- ▶ The **approval rate** for women and men has balanced out to a certain degree over the years.
- ▶ At around 48%, the **percentage of women among project staff** is a good 15 percentage points higher than among principal investigators. This indicates structural effects of the "leaky pipeline."



Fixing the Institutions: First conference for non-discriminatory research

In May, some 80 experts met at the FWF to discuss strategies for combatting discrimination and sexualized harassment in research. After opening remarks by the FWF and the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), Federal Minister Eva-Maria Holzleitner emphasized the need for safe, non-discriminatory working conditions. The Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research presented the first data on gender-based violence at research institutions. The Federal Ministry of Innovation, Mobility, and Infrastructure presented the Diversitec initiatives, which are intended to strengthen psychological safety and responsible leadership. Anke Lipinsky (GESIS/UniSAFE) talked about the

systemic nature of violence and many people's reluctance to report it. The FWF guidelines for a safe research culture were also introduced, followed by the University of Vienna's u:respect awareness campaign. Anti-discrimination expert Sophie Rendl highlighted structural factors such as fixed-term employment relationships, rigid hierarchies, and economic dependencies as key causes behind the abuse of power.

The findings from the survey and the conference emphasize the need for a safe, inclusive, and diverse research culture, which the FWF continues to support through various measures.

The conference showed: It takes more than just good intentions – what's needed are defined structures, clear standards, and independent contacts.



The FWF's measures for more equal opportunities and diversity include the implementation of an equality plan and the consistent monitoring of funding statistics.

Majority Satisfied, Lack of Prospects for Early-Stage Researchers

What is the state of research in Austria? A large-scale survey of more than 3,300 researchers shows a differentiated picture: The majority are satisfied with their profession, value freedom of research and international cooperation – but the next generation is struggling with insecure prospects, fixed-term contracts, and a lack of social recognition.

The study, commissioned by the FWF and conducted by Spectra Marktforschung, provides insights into researchers' careers and working environments. Austria performed well in terms of internationality and freedom of research – two thirds of respondents reported being satisfied with their profession. They value the freedom to define their research focus independently and the international networking opportunities within the scientific community. The sense of community among colleagues and the available mentoring options were also given good marks.

Autonomy in research work was rated particularly well: It is seen as one of the Austrian research system's greatest strengths. Researchers experience their work as meaningful and appreciate the high degree of international

cooperation. The openness towards interdisciplinary approaches and the increasing importance of open science help make Austria more attractive as a research location.

Availability of third-party funding increases the attractiveness of the location

A significant proportion of research activities in Austria are financed using third-party funding. It is part of researchers' everyday life to have to raise all or at least part of their research budget by acquiring third-party funds. The FWF is Austria's most important address for funding applications in basic research, which is why it is well known within the scientific community.

Precarious career development as a permanent uncertainty factor

Around two thirds of researchers are (very) satisfied with their job. Aspects that are viewed more

critically are the professional position, teaching activities, and especially work-life balance. The latter is viewed more critically by women of all ages than by their male counterparts. Although many respondents expressed overall satisfaction with their professional situation, half of the researchers surveyed have recently given serious thought to leaving academia. These thoughts are disproportionately strong among people in their twenties and thirties. Regardless of gender, the survey results show three decisive factors: "Temporary nature of the job" and "Serial short-term contracts," which affect all age groups but are even more unsatisfactory for researchers under the age of 30, and "Uncertain career development," which causes doubt between the ages of 30 and 49. Eight out of ten postdocs in all scientific disciplines have clear doubts about their career prospects in academia. In addition, long qualification processes, non-competitive



income opportunities, and hierarchical structures that negatively impact self-employment are cited as critical career factors.

Focus on performance assessment

There is a clear gap between the status quo and the target with regard to performance appraisal criteria. Academic publications are currently the decisive criterion for most respondents. Respondents view this positively and don't want it to change. According to the surveyed researchers, other currently decisive criteria are successfully acquired third-party funding and internal networks. Many survey respondents feel these are weighted too heavily. Compared to the status quo, teaching, science communication, and social relevance should play a much greater role in performance assessment.

Discrimination and scientific integrity

One in four respondents reported witnessing or experiencing discrimination in the workplace (due to gender, ethnic origin, age), with women being more likely to be subject to discrimination. Over half of all respondents reported observing questionable behavior regarding academic integrity, especially problems related to authorship.

The academic system: Desired reforms and areas of strength

The Spectra survey highlights the most pressing issues and where researchers believe there is a need for reform in the academic system: By far the most important issues with the broadest support are increasing the number and type of permanent positions below professorships, stronger promotion of open science, more extensive opportunities for time off for research, and the implementation of flatter hierarchies.

The Austrian science system was given the best marks for autonomy and freedom of research. The social relevance of research, performance in international comparison, and innovative capacity, while still good, received slightly lower grades. Appreciation by society is reported to be lacking by many respondents.

Positive feedback on administration of funding and quality of support services

The quality of the information, guidelines, and support provided during the application process is rated very positively by the majority of respondents. There is room for improvement in the transparency and understandability of grounds for rejections, especially in view of

the low approval rates – an issue that the FWF will be focusing on more closely. The majority of respondents find the application process unbureaucratic and the review and decision-making procedures transparent.

Austria's most comprehensive survey of researchers

With more than 3,300 participants, the 2025 Survey of the Austrian Research Community is the largest survey of researchers in Austria to date. It provides a comprehensive impression of working conditions, career prospects, and researchers' expectations of the academic system.

The result is both encouraging and challenging: Austria's foundations as a research location are strong, built on excellence, academic freedom, and international networking – but its long-term viability depends on whether it can retain young talent in the scientific community.



The FWF's 2025 Survey of the Austrian Research Community, conducted by Spectra Marktforschung





Pulling together for more philanthropy in basic research:

(from left to right): Ursula Jakubek, Sabine Seidler (Chair), Christoph Neumayer, and Susanne Müller-Taborsky form the Board of the FWF's nonprofit alpha+ Foundation, which serves on an honorary basis.

alpha+ Increasing Philanthropy in Cutting-Edge Research

Since 2014, the FWF has been cooperating with non-profit foundations and organizations to open up new perspectives for top researchers. In 2019, it took a further step and established the alpha+ Foundation, a federal non-profit foundation. The alpha+ Foundation offers Austria's researchers in the field of basic research additional opportunities thanks to private donations.

The objectives of the FWF's alpha+ Foundation are to create new research grants based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and support the careers of highly talented young researchers.

The FWF and the alpha+ Foundation are charitable organizations, making donations from individuals as well as from companies tax-deductible. The opportunities for philanthropic involvement are flexible and unbureaucratic.

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Do you want to help open a new chapter in Austrian research history?
The Board of the alpha+ Foundation is looking forward to hearing from you.

Zero Emissions Awards

Pioneering Projects for a Climate-Neutral Future

Introducing the three Zero Emissions Award-winning projects 2025:



Developing batteries from ecological materials: Rajesh B. Jethwa, Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA)

Turning organic waste into sustainable energy: Eva Maria Prem, University of Innsbruck

Extracting pharmaceutically relevant molecules from wood: Katalin Barta Weissert, University of Graz



WE & ME Foundation WE&ME Award for Basic Research on ME/CFS



Thanks to a donation from the WE&ME Foundation, €450,000 are now available to fund the search for urgently needed knowledge about a little-understood disease.

From left to right: FWF President Christof Gattringer, Caroline and Gerhard Ströck (WE&ME Foundation), Minister of Science Eva-Maria Holzleitner, FWF Vice-President Ursula Jakubek, and Susanne Müller-Taborsky (alpha+ Foundation)



Discovering
what matters.

Video: Basic research in Austria



Funding Opportunities and Success Stories

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On its website, the FWF provides comprehensive information about funding opportunities and presents discoveries and research findings. In the “Discover” section, visitors to the website can find out about research discoveries and search the Research Radar page to get an overview of

all funded projects. The “Funding” section is aimed at applicants and principal investigators. There they can find all the information they need on funding programs, submitting proposals, and implementing their projects. Practical services like the event calendar and the FWF Newsletter make sure they stay up to date.



Discovering and learning: At fwf.ac.at, the FWF presents Austria’s top research – from success stories and all funded projects on the Research Radar page to current funding opportunities and practical services.

Five decades of FWF funding at a glance:

The Research Radar is the online showcase of Austrian basic research. The page offers a transparent overview of all FWF projects and their research output.



Information and inspiration: The FWF Newsletter brings cutting-edge research directly to your inbox – current projects, funding information, and news from Austria’s scientific community at a glance.

State of the art of Austrian research:

Follow the FWF on social media and discover current projects, inspiring research stories, and insights into Austrian science.





ARCTIC REACTS SENSITIVELY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

A spectacular discovery shows how sensitively the Arctic reacts to climate fluctuations. In 2025, a research team from the University of Innsbruck discovered limestone deposits in a remote cave on the north coast of Greenland that prove that northern Greenland was temporarily permafrost-free in the late Miocene period, around 5 to 11 million years ago.

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The late Miocene is considered a key period in climate research, as CO₂ levels were similar to those predicted for the coming decades. Analyses of the cave deposits show several phases of a warm, humid climate.

“Our results show that northern Greenland was permafrost-free at only moderate CO₂ concentrations, levels we already exceeded several decades ago,” says principal investigator Gina Moseley from the University of Innsbruck.

The results, published in *Nature Geoscience*, raise concerns that today’s permafrost regions are becoming unstable. Permanently frozen soils contain enormous amounts of carbon, which can escape as CO₂ and methane when they thaw – a process that would further accelerate global warming. “Any restriction of warming is crucial to avoid such feedback loops,” emphasizes Moseley.



5

Facts, Figures, Executive Bodies and Committees



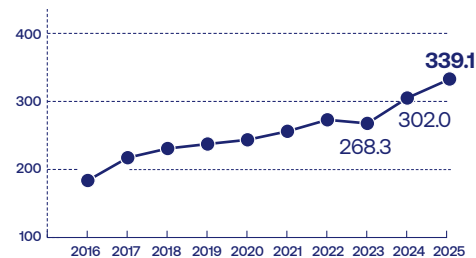
Funding Balance 2025

Applications & Approvals



Total new grants
in € million

1,549.8 Total application volume in € million



Annual development
(the excellent-austria initiative added €80.7 million in 2023 and
€105.9 million in 2024)



Approved applications

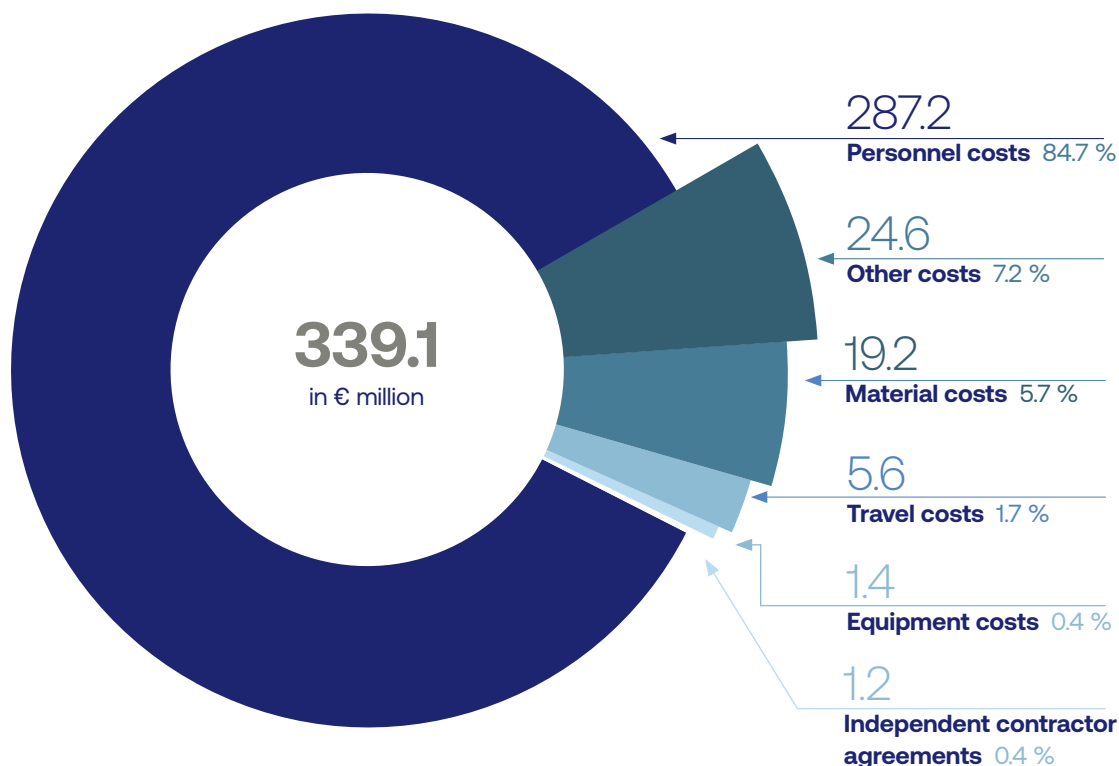
3,119 Number of applications handled



Approval rate 2025 in %: Women: 21.2, Men: 25.7, Non-binary: 25.0, Total: 24.0
Approval rate ø 2016-2025 in %: Women: 23.7, Men: 24.9, Total: 24.5

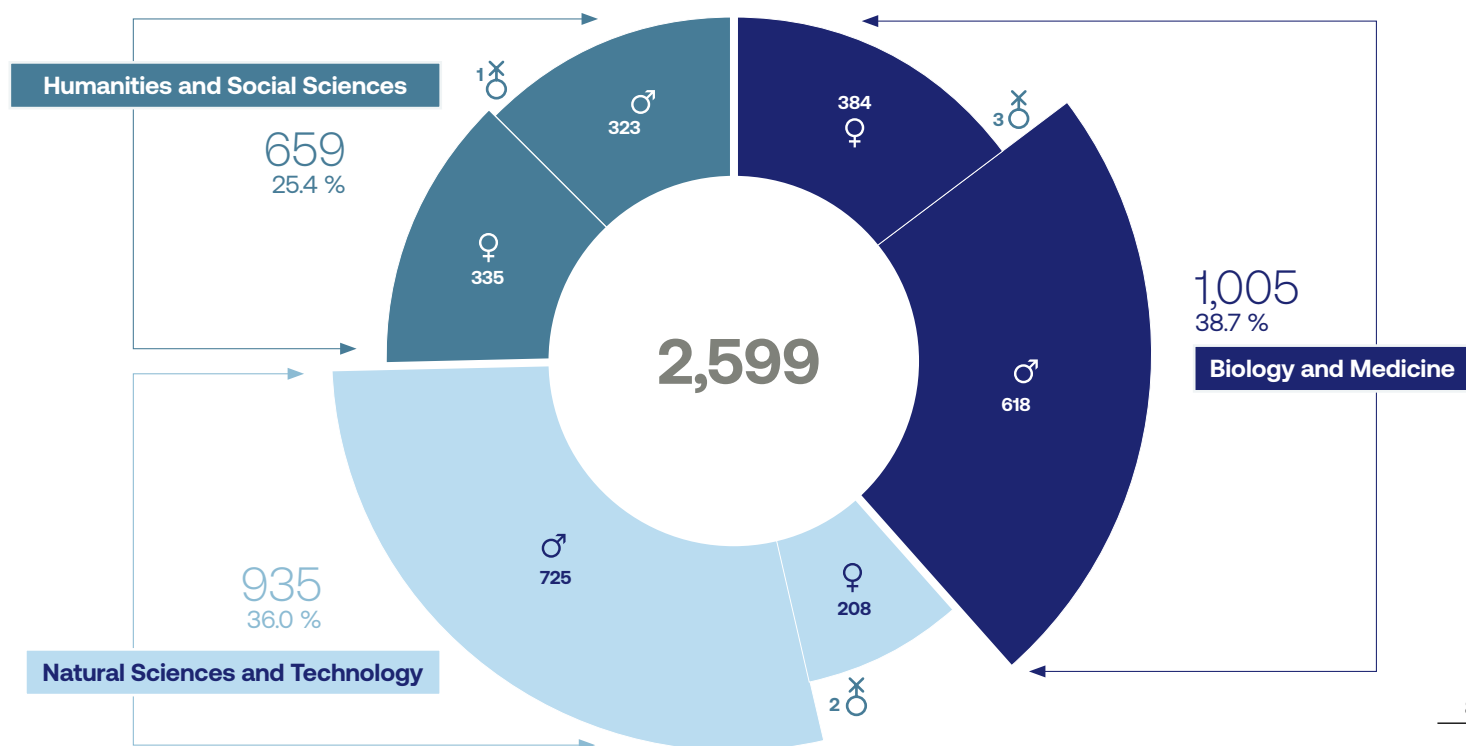
84

Grants by Cost Category



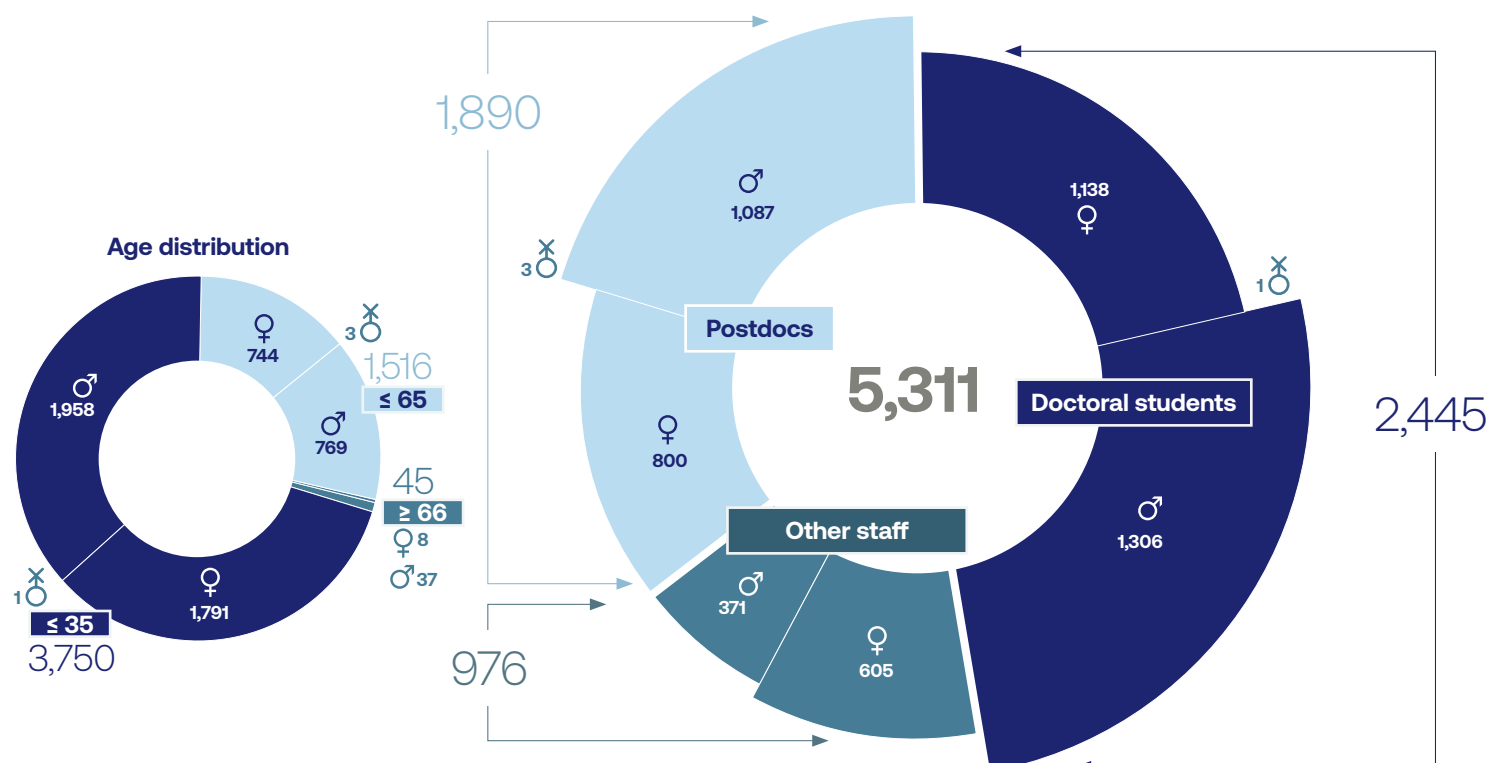
Further Key Figures

Ongoing Projects by Discipline Group

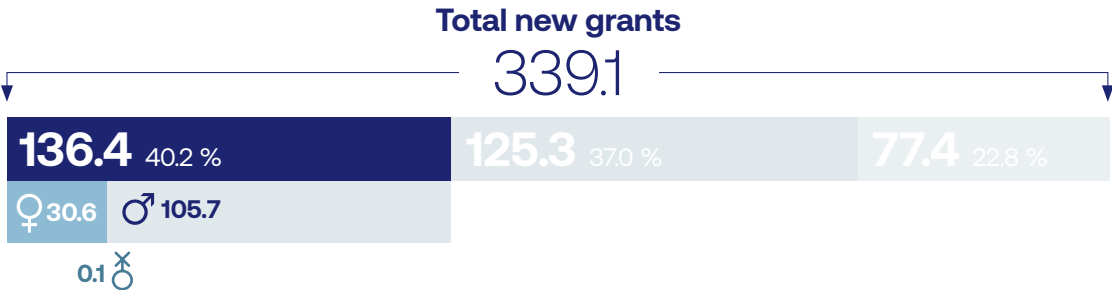


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FWF-Funded Research Staff

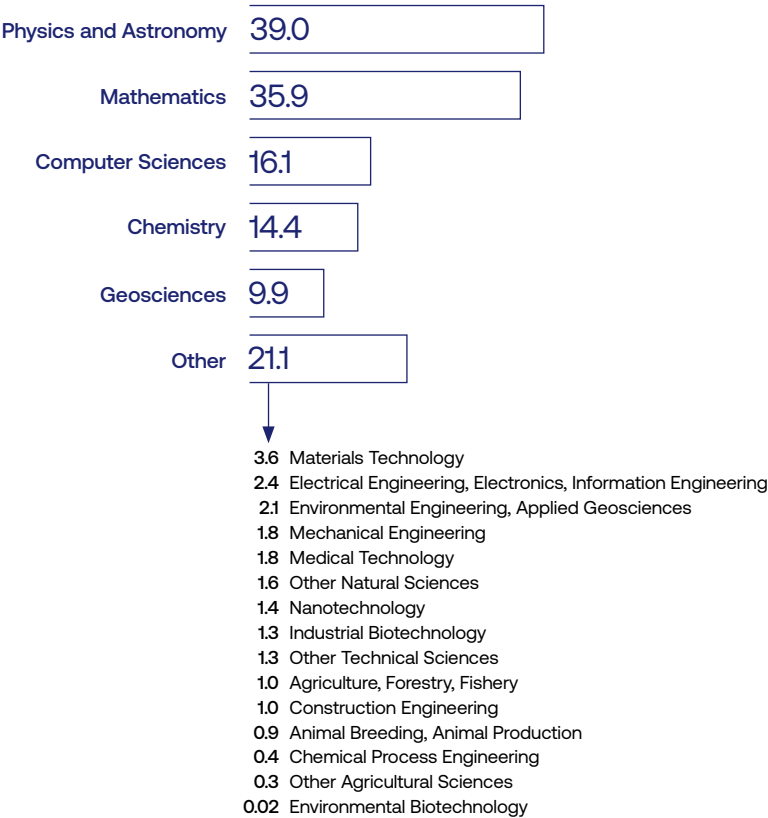


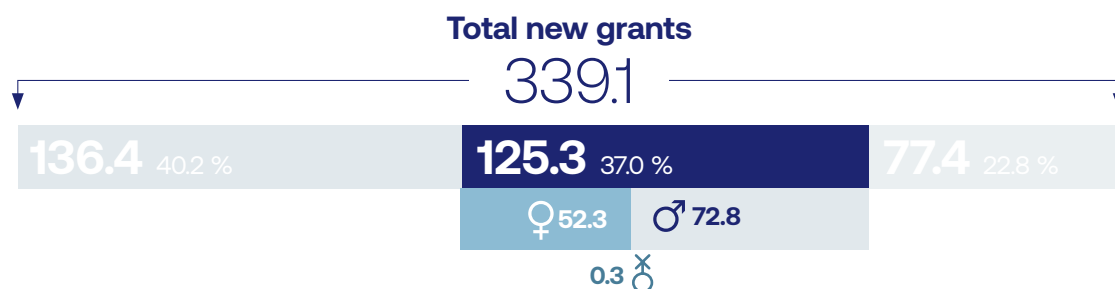
Ongoing Projects by Discipline Group



Natural Sciences and Technology ∅ 2020-2024: 41.7%

(Applications: 620.1 million: ♀ 172.3 ♂ 447.2 X 0.6)

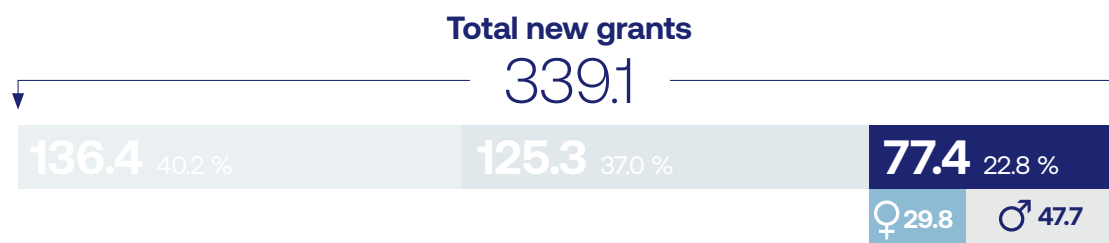
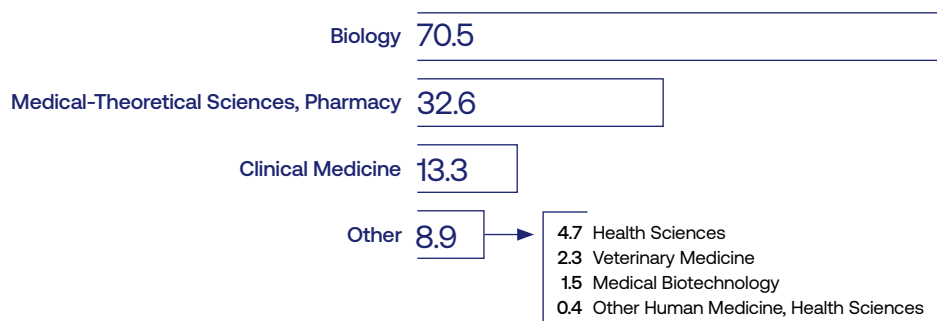




Biology and Medicine

∅ 2020-2024: 36.7 %

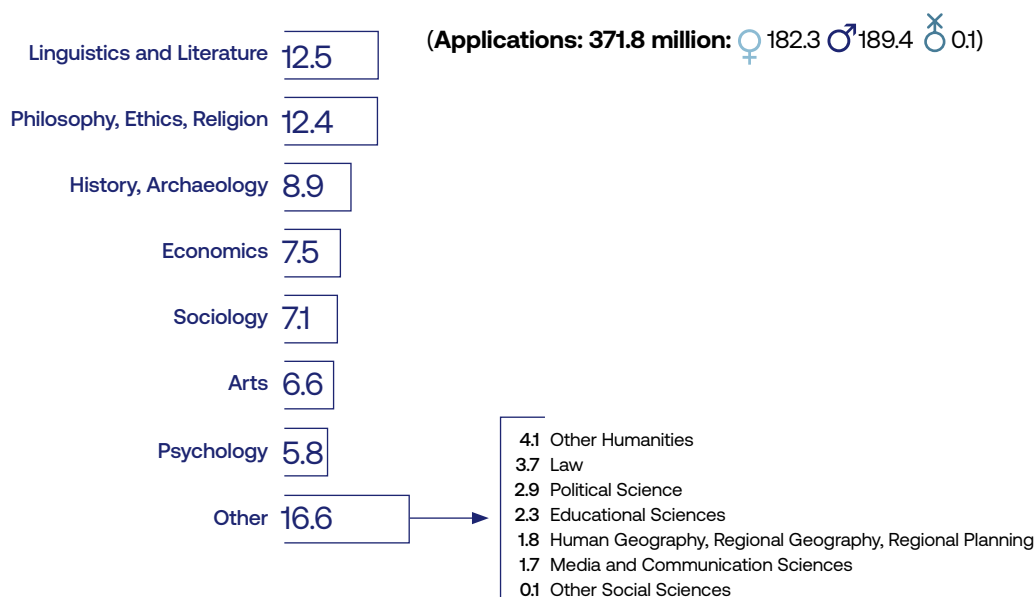
(Applications: 557.9 million: ♀ 243.0 ♂ 313.5 X 1.3)



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Humanities and Social Sciences

∅ 2020-2024: 21.6 %

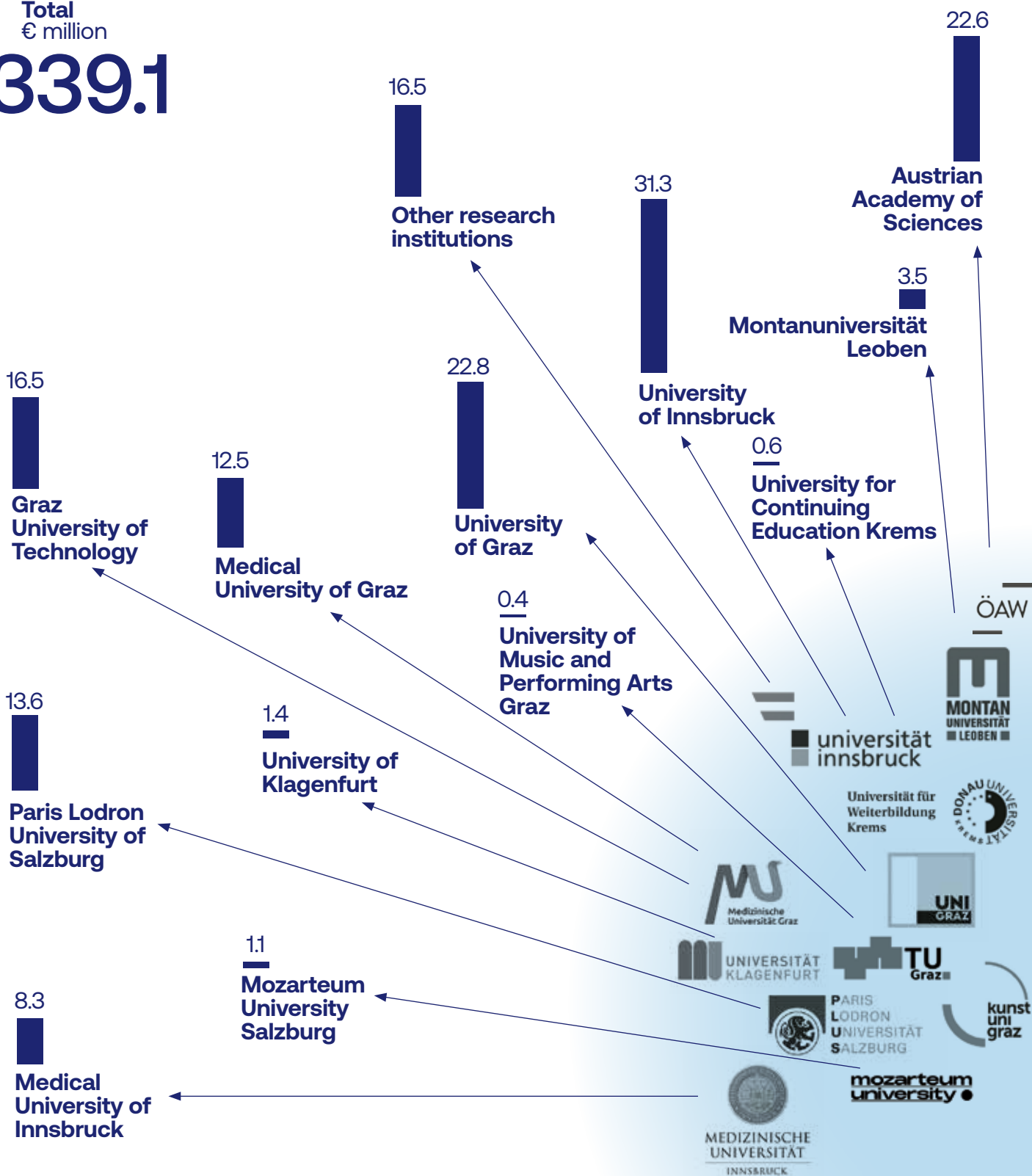


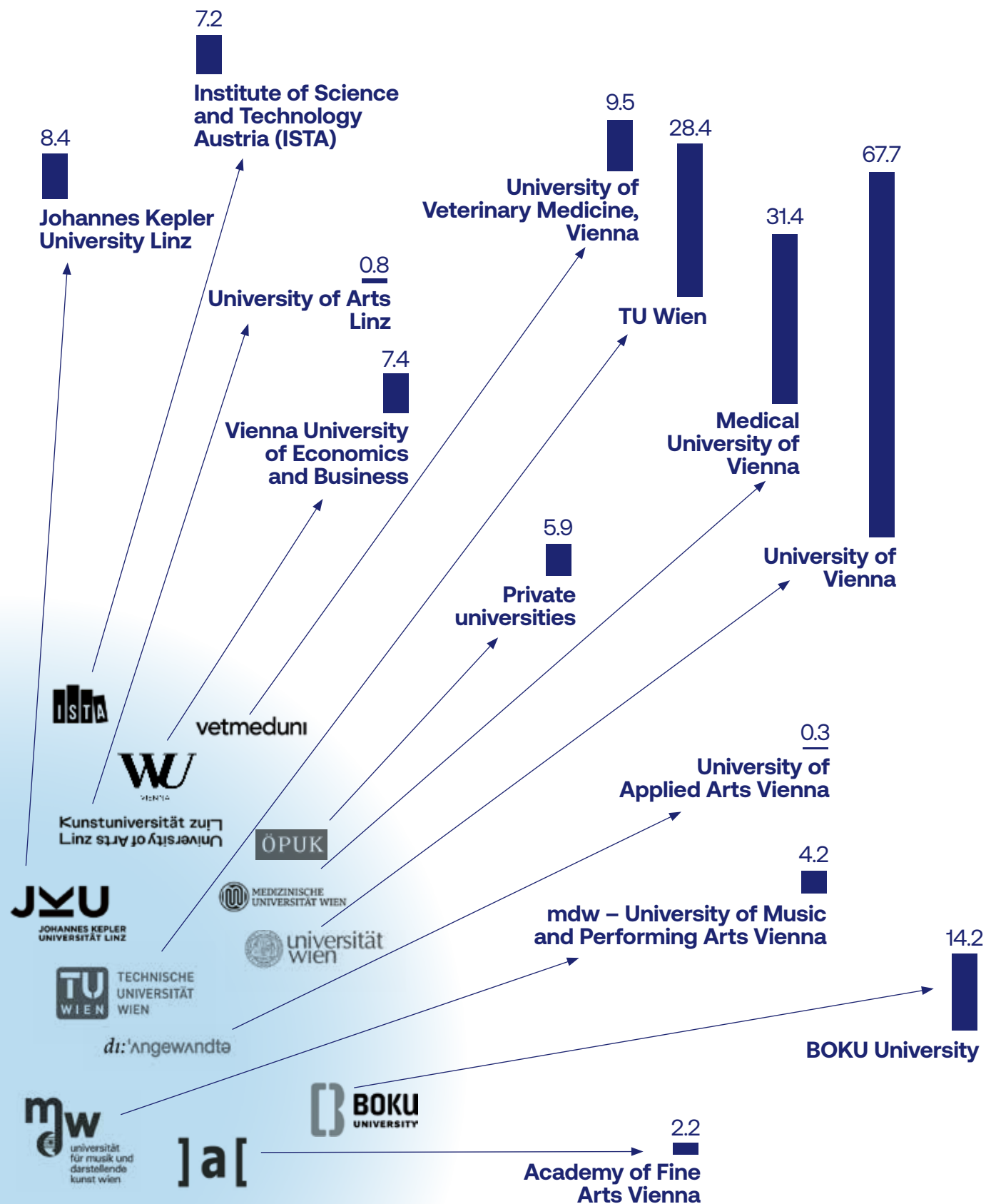
Grants by Research Institution

Total
€ million

339.1

88

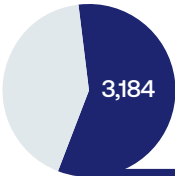
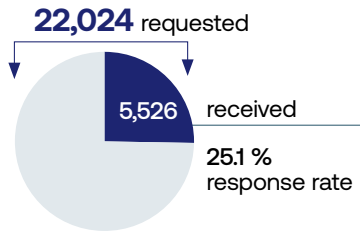




Reviews Received by Country



Reviews requested and received



Europe

90

	720	Germany		19	Greece
	608	Great Britain		16	Hungary
	330	Italy		13	Slovenia
	267	France		11	Luxembourg
	223	Netherlands		10	Croatia
	180	Spain		9	Romania
	167	Switzerland		6	Slovakia
	102	Sweden		4	Lithuania
	89	Belgium		3	Estonia
	70	Finland		3	Serbia
	66	Poland		3	Ukraine
	65	Denmark		2	Bulgaria
	59	Ireland		2	Iceland
	54	Norway		1	Latvia
	45	Portugal		1	North Macedonia
	36	Czech Republic			

1,690

Americas

	1,398	USA		7	Chile
	223	Canada		1	Ecuador
	36	Brazil		1	Colombia
	12	Mexico		1	Peru
	10	Argentina		1	Uruguay

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Oceania, Asia, Africa

	145	Australia		3	Egypt
	125	China		3	Iran
	93	Japan		3	Qatar
	61	Israel		3	Saudi Arabia
	37	India		1	Armenia
	32	South Korea		1	Brunei
	28	Singapore		1	Georgia
	26	South Africa		1	Jordan
	23	New Zealand		1	Madagascar
	16	Türkiye		1	Morocco
	12	Hong Kong (Chinese Special Administrative Region)		1	Pakistan
	10	Taiwan		1	Philippines
	9	Malaysia		1	Zambia
	7	United Arab Emirates		1	Thailand
	5	Cyprus		1	Vietnam

Executive Board

7th term (2024-2028)



President
Christof GATTRINGER



Executive Vice-President
Ursula JAKUBEK

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**Vice-President
of Research**
Biology
and Medicine
Christoph BINDER
Medical University of Vienna
*Clinical Institute
for Laboratory Medicine*



**Vice-President
of Research**
Natural Sciences and
Technology
Georg KASER
University of Innsbruck
*Department of Atmospheric
and Cryospheric Sciences*



**Vice-President
of Research**
Humanities and
Social Sciences
Eva KERNBAUER
University of
Applied Arts Vienna
Department of Art History

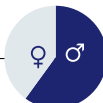
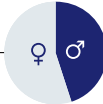
Supervisory Board

7th term (2023-2027)

Chair Heinz W. ENGL	Deputy Chair Susanne KALSS
	Members Gabriele AMBROS Günther R. BURKERT Wilfried EICHLSEDER Ulrike FELT Eva GOLLUBITS Ulrike TANZER Rudolf ZECHNER FWF Works Council Andrea WALD-BRUCKNER Consultant Members Gertrude TUMPEL-GUGERELL Martin GERZABEK

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Gender Data

	Total	Women/Men/Non-binary	
Executive Board	5	2/3	
Supervisory Board	10	6/4	
Assembly of Delegates ¹⁾	60	33/27	
Scientific Board	73	32/41	
PEEK Jury	6	3/3	
ASTRA/Wittgenstein Jury	16	9/7	
FWF Office ²⁾	155	111/41/3	

1) Voting members

2) Active employees (as of April 1, 2026)

Assembly of Delegates

7th term (2023-2027)

Chair

Manuela BACCARINI
University of Vienna

Deputy Chair

Andrea HÖGLINGER
Graz University of Technology

INSTITUTION Member Deputy

UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA: Manuela BACCARINI, Sebastian SCHÜTZE
UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ: Joachim REIDL, Mireille VAN POPPEL
UNIVERSITY OF INNSBRUCK: Gregor WEIHS, Veronika SEXL
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA: Michaela FRITZ, Maria SIBILIA
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ: Akos HEINEMANN, Christian ENZINGER
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF INNSBRUCK: Patrizia STOITZNER, Ludger HENGST
UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG: Jutta HOREJS-HÖCK, Andrea SPANNRING
TU WIEN: Peter ERTL, Elisabeth SCHLUDERMANN
TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ: Andrea HÖGLINGER, Horst BISCHOF
MONTANUNIVERSITÄT LEOBEN: Helmut ANTREKOWITSCH, Oskar PARIS
BOKU UNIVERSITY: Christian OBINGER, Eva SCHULEV-STEINDL
UNIVERSITY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, VIENNA: Martina MARCHETTI-DESCHMANN, Mathias MÜLLER
WU VIENNA UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS: Bernadette KAMLEITNER, Manuela WADE
UNIVERSITY OF LINZ: Alberta BONANNI, Carsten SCHNEIDER
UNIVERSITY OF KLAGENFURT: Jan STEINBRENER, Martina MERZ
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED ARTS VIENNA: Clemens APPRICH, Alexander DAMIANISCH
UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS VIENNA: Therese KAUFMANN, Nikolaus URBANEK
MOZARTEUM UNIVERSITY SALZBURG: Eugen BANAUCH, Elisabeth GUTJAHR
UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS GRAZ: Elisabeth VAN TREECK, Roland REITER
UNIVERSITY OF ARTS LINZ: Andre ZOGHOLY, Karin HARRASSER
ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS VIENNA: Michaela GLANZ, Paul REITER
UNIVERSITY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION KREMS: Viktoria WEBER, Katrin KAINEDER
AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES: Heinz FASSMANN, Christiane WENDEHORST
AIT AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY: Andreas KUGL, Lina BITTNER-FRANK
INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AUSTRIA (ISTA): Martin HETZER, Georgios KATSAROS
LUDWIG BOLTZMANN GESELLSCHAFT: Sylvia KNAPP, Andrea BARTA
AUSTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES: Johann KASTNER, Andreas ALTMANN
AUSTRIAN NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS: Selina WIENERROITHER, Viktoria KUDRNA
AUSTRIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES CONFERENCE: Andrea OLSCHESKI, Rosemarie BRUCHER
NON-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH - FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR INNOVATION, MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Sonja SHEIKH, Tanja KOSTIC

Non-voting members

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF WOMEN, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH: Eva GOTTMANN, Annabel GILBERT
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INNOVATION, MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE:
 Veronika HOPFGARTNER, Margit HARJUNG
FWF EXECUTIVE BOARD:
 Christof GATTRINGER
 Ursula JAKUBEK
 Christoph BINDER
 Georg KASER
 Eva KERNBAUER

Scientific Board

7th term (2023–2026)

Executive Board of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF)

Christof GATTRINGER, Ursula JAKUBEK, Christoph BINDER, Georg KASER, Eva KERNBAUER

DISCIPLINE Scientific Consultant Deputy

Natural Sciences and Technology

MATHEMATICS I: Verena BÖGELEIN, University of Salzburg, **Christoph AISTLEITNER**, Graz University of Technology **MATHEMATICS II:** Laszlo ERDÖS, Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), Erika HAUSENBLAS, Montanuniversität Leoben **COMPUTER SCIENCE I:** Ana SOKOLOVA, University of Salzburg, Franz WOTAWA, Graz University of Technology **COMPUTER SCIENCE II:** Silvia MIKSCH, TU Wien, Bernhard RINNER, University of Klagenfurt **EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS:** Andreas NEY, University of Linz, Julian LÉONARD, TU Wien **THEORETICAL PHYSICS AND ASTROPHYSICS:** Markus AICHHORN, Graz University of Technology, Josef PRADLER, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Anita REIMER, University of Innsbruck **INORGANIC CHEMISTRY:** Erik REIMHULT, BOKU University, Annette ROMPEL, University of Vienna **ORGANIC CHEMISTRY:** Nuno MAULIDE, University of Vienna, Ronald MICURA, University of Innsbruck **GEOSCIENCES:** Andrea Karin STEINER, University of Graz, Rainer ABART, University of Vienna **ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY:** Martin HORN, Graz University of Technology, Tibor GRASSER, TU Wien **MATERIAL SCIENCES:** Andreas LUDWIG, Montanuniversität Leoben, Paul Heinz MAYRHOFER, TU Wien

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Biology and Medicine

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