In accordance with its Funding Guidelines of 1 January 2021 (as last amended), the FWF has issued the following

Application Guidelines for Special Research Programme (SFB) (1st Stage – Draft proposal; valid from 1 April 2021)
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1. **General Information**

1.1. **Aim of the programme**

The creation of research networks to international standards is to be achieved by autonomous concentration at one university location, or under certain conditions at several university locations. The funding in the SFB programme serves to develop extraordinarily efficient, closely networked research units to deal with generally inter/multidisciplinary, long-term, complex research topics.

1.2. **Definitions**

Nachfolgend werden in den Antragsrichtlinien verwendeten Begriffe erklärt:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead research institution</th>
<th>The Austrian research institution that submits the application and where the coordinator(^1) is located.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating research institution</td>
<td>Austrian research institution that is involved in the application and where the participating researchers work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>5–15 scientists/scholars on the FWF project incl. coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young researchers</td>
<td>Researchers with at least 2 years of postdoctoral research experience (national/international experience or experience in carrying out their own research project, e.g. FWF project), who themselves lead a subproject in the SFB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subproject leader</td>
<td>The researchers of the SFB are responsible for the management of SFB subprojects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subproject</td>
<td>Research unit in the SFB that is described and budgeted by the individual researcher and can only be implemented in conjunction with other subprojects of the SFB. A subproject leader must be assigned to each subproject. Each researcher (incl. coordinator) may lead max. one scientific subproject, the project management is formally not divisible. The coordinator may lead max. one scientific subproject and manages the coordination budget for the coordination of the SFB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>This researcher is responsible for the scientific management of the SFB and also for the management of the SFB; he or she is appointed by the research institution as a representative within the framework of the project implementation of the funding contract; formerly spokesperson of the SFB. The coordinator of an SFB project cannot serve simultaneously as the coordinator in a doc.funds project (DOC) or a doctoral programme (DK).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Organisational guidelines for gender-neutral language, including non-binary persons, are currently being developed.
Coordination budget

Project-specific travel, other and material costs necessary for the coordination of the project.

Administrative coordination position

A full-time coordinator position (postdoc rate) can be applied for to provide administrative support to the coordinator; ideally, this person has experience in science/academic management.

Staff

Academic staff in the research group who are financed by the approved FWF funding for the SFB (PhD, postdoc positions, technical personnel).

Members

All researchers and staff in the research group.

Own position

The salary of the researcher financed from the funds of the approved FWF funding of the SFB.

Statutes

The statutes are the agreement between researchers. They are to be drawn up as part of the second stage, the full proposal, and to describe the tasks and competences of the coordinator and regulate the cooperation between the researchers as well as the decision-making processes. They must be signed by the researchers and attached to the application.

1.3. Deadlines

The deadline for submission (approval of applications by the research institution) is 30 September 2021 (2 pm local time, Vienna/Austria) online at https://elane.fwf.ac.at.

1.4. Who is eligible to apply?

All Austrian research institutions are eligible to apply. There is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted by a research institution. The scientific/scholarly question is to be deepened at Austrian research institutions. The SFB that deals with this question is anchored at one location, under certain conditions several locations (but with at least 50% of the subprojects at one location).

The SFB for which funding is requested must consist of at least 5 and a maximum of 15 researchers with one third of the under-represented gender; in the context of the evaluation procedure the composition of the team is defined as a decision-relevant criterion. These are internationally outstanding scientists/scholars (researchers and young researchers) from all disciplines, especially in the humanities, social and cultural sciences. In the case of implementation of an SFB research potential must be available and the nucleus of the

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2 Research location = all research institutions located in a city/municipality; all research institutions within a maximum radius of 80 km (as the crow flies) that regularly cooperate with the research institution directly located at the site are also considered to be the same research location.

3 See document Background information target ratio SFB
scientists/scholars placing the application must be sufficiently large and well qualified to be able to establish and run a research program of international standing within the scientific/scholarly profile of the participating research institution(s);

The researchers are as a rule employed at Austrian research institutions and are either funded by the research institution or financed by the project as part of their own position (see section 2.6.2). If they are employed part-time at the time of the start of the project, an increase to full employment through the project is possible.

In addition, the participation of an international researcher who is employed at least 25% at an Austrian research institution is possible.4

One researcher from the team assumes the task of coordinator (formerly spokesperson). The researchers (incl. coordinator) are managers of subprojects. The coordinator represents the SFB externally and also manages its own subproject in the SFB in addition to the funds for the coordination of the SFB. The position of coordinator can only be exercised in max. one SFB project. The coordinator of an SFB project cannot simultaneously perform a coordinator function in a doc.funds (DOC) and a speaker function in a doctoral programme (DK).

With 5 researchers at least 3 groups must be anchored at one research location; otherwise the rule of at least 50% of the groups at one location applies; subprojects from Germany that are financed on the basis of an LAV agreement (see researchers from Germany), are included in this distribution rule.

**Multiple participation in the SFB programme:** Each researcher may only participate in a maximum of two SFBs, including participation in an SFB funded by the DFG in Germany. Each researcher may lead a maximum of 1 scientific/scholarly subproject within an SFB.

**Researcher from Germany** can be involved in the SFB through international cooperation (LAV-agreement). The integration takes place according to the rules of the FWF and must be agreed with the FWF before the draft proposal is submitted. Such integration must also be notified in advance to the funding organisation DFG.

**Restrictions on the number of projects:** In addition to participation in the SFB programme it is possible to assume project management for three projects that differ from the SFB in terms of content in the categories of individual projects, international programmes, clinical research, programme for arts-based research.

4 Potential applicants are considered eligible in cases where they have a genuine part-time contract of employment (extent of employment: at least 25%) which is not funded by the FWF and which is guaranteed for the planned duration of the project. Before submitting an application, researchers are required to submit evidence of such an employment arrangement and a brief description of the project, including a plan for its execution, information on the researcher's presence on site, rules of representation, etc., for approval by the FWF.
1.5. What types of projects can be funded?

Applications can be submitted for the implementation of a joint multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary project, that aims at gaining scientific/scholarly knowledge. The project duration is limited to a support period of 48 months. As part of the project description, the first application period is to be described in detail, the long-term perspective as an overview (long-term, short-term research goals). A Special Research Programme can be funded for a maximum of eight years.

In all cases, the SFBs should pursue scientific/scholarly goals that as a rule go beyond established disciplinary boundaries and therefore require the collaboration of several researchers of different specialisations. Owing to the multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary issues involved, these projects can only be worked on jointly from different perspectives and thus open up unusual new fields of research. The SFB extends an innovative topic in Austria, builds on existing research potential and supplements the existing research priorities at research institutions.

Aspects of a research project that go beyond the realm of science and scholarship may be mentioned, but they will not play a part in the assessment of whether the project should be funded. Double funding is not permitted (see Funding guidelines).

1.6. What requirements must be met to apply?

All researchers participating are eligible to apply if their publication record over the last five years has been internationally visible and if their current career stage is commensurate with the career progression expected in their field. The following criteria are decisive in assessing their publication record—documented in the “Publication list” (see section 2.5.)—and in initiating the review process:

- **Quality assurance:** Most relevant in assessing the researcher’s publication record are those publications that have undergone a quality assurance procedure in line with international standards (peer review or an equivalent procedure; in the natural and life sciences, peer review is expected). Journals must usually be listed in Web of Science, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). In the case of journals that are not listed in these databases, or in the case of monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, or other publication types, the applicant must provide a link to the publisher’s website, describing the respective quality assurance procedure. If no description should be available, it is the applicant’s responsibility to provide evidence that the publication has been subject to an appropriate quality assurance procedure.

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5 Definition: “Interdisciplinarity” refers to the integration-oriented interaction of people from at least two disciplines with regard to common goals and results, with the disciplinary perspectives being brought together to form an overall view.
International visibility: Most of the researcher’s publications must have a wider than national reach. In the natural sciences, life sciences, and social sciences, most of the publications listed must be in English.

Number/scope and quality of the researcher’s publications must be commensurate with the expected career progression and the field concerned. At least two publications must have undergone a quality assurance procedure and must be internationally visible with a substantial and independent contribution on the part of the researcher. At least one first-or last-author publication is required in the life sciences.

Should a researcher fail to meet one or more of the above criteria, the researcher must include an explanation with the application. In cases of doubt, the decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide whether the research qualifications are adequate.

1.6.1. Consideration of career breaks

The FWF will take justified career breaks (e.g., parental leave, caring for a family member, or long-term illness) into consideration in assessing the researcher’s eligibility to apply. Relevant information can be included in the academic CV and thus also be available to the reviewers.

1.6.2. Inclusion of disabled and chronically ill people

The FWF will also take any exceptions to typical career paths due to disability and/or chronic illness into consideration in assessing the researcher’s eligibility to apply. Relevant information can be included in the academic CV and thus also be available to the reviewers.

1.7. What types of funding can be requested?

Project-specific costs are eligible for funding. These include personnel and non-personnel costs that are necessary for carrying out the project (Benchmark EUR 1,000,000.00 per year) and that go beyond the resources provided by the infrastructure of the research institution. The FWF does not finance the infrastructure or basic equipment of research institutions.

For information on requesting funding for the personnel costs of the researcher (= researcher’s own position) see section 2.6.2, please note that exaggerated costs may represent a reason for rejecting an application, even one that is considered excellent in terms of content.

2. Application content and form

2.1. Sections of the application

For an application to be complete, it must contain the following sections:

1) Academic abstract in English comprising no more than 3,000 characters (incl. spaces;
no formulas or special characters). The academic abstract will be used to inform potential reviewers about the project. The abstract must be subdivided into the following sections using the given English terms:

▪ Wider research context / theoretical framework
▪ Hypotheses / research questions / objectives
▪ Approach/methods
▪ Level of originality / innovation
▪ Added value
▪ Researchers

Where options are given (indicated by slashes), please choose an option that is appropriate for your project.

2) **Project description:**

▪ Cover sheet: Project title, Lead research institution (address and director) und name und institution adresse of the coordinator; list of the collaborating research institution/s (address and director) including details of the researchers working there (name and institute address).

▪ List of contents

▪ Project description on no more than 15 consecutively numbered pages (excluding cover sheet and list of contents), list of abbreviations, headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.;

    **The following content of the project description** is expected:

   − Description of the innovative multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research programme.
   − The human potential of the SFB.
   − Further-reaching effects on the Austrian scientific/academic system.
   − Organisation and financing of the SFB

▪ In addition **one abstract on each scientific/scholarly subproject** (max. 3000 characters incl. spacesmax. 1 page per subproject).

3) **Annexes:**

Please note that **annexes are a part of the application** and they must be attached to the project description in the order listed below:

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

▪ Annex 2: Information on research institution(s) and justification of requested funding;

▪ Annex 3: Academic curriculum vitae and description of previous research
achievements for each researcher and staff (postdocs financed by the SFB) (no more than 3 pages per person);

- Annex 4 (optional): Confirmations (collaboration letters) of national and international cooperation partners (no more than 1 page per letter);

The project description including these appendices must be uploaded as a single file called proposal.pdf. The FWF will send this document to the reviewers.

4) **Attachments to be uploaded individually:**

   - **Mandatory:**
     - Attachment 1: for each researcher and postdoc financed by the SFB a publication list for the last 5 years, broken down into quality assured and non-quality assured (see also section 2.5.) must be compiled; all lists are to be uploaded together in one PDF document as Publication_list.pdf.
     - Attachment 2: commitment of all participating research institutions

   - **Where applicable:**
     - Cover letter
     - Only for junior researchers (with at least 2 years research experience): PDF scan of the doctoral certificate and proof of 2 years postdoctoral research experience
     - List of reviewers to be excluded
     - Response(s) to reviews
     - For resubmissions: overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application

5) **Completed forms**

   - Required forms: Academic abstract, Application form, Contact form, Programme specific data form, Cost breakdown form and Co-authors form;
   - Optional forms: National/International cooperation arrangements form.

2.2. **Formal requirements**

2.2.1. **Language of application**

In order to ensure the international review process, all applications must be submitted without exception in English.

2.2.2. **Formatting**

The continuous text in the project description, annexes 1–3, and the attachments (except for vendor quotes) must be written in 11 pt. font with 1.5 line (15-20 pt.) spacing and at least 2 cm margins. Applicants must comply strictly with all upper limits (e.g., number of pages, attachments, etc.).

Citations in the text and the list of works cited (References) in the application must be in line with the conventions of the respective discipline, preferably according to a widely-used style guide (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, APA Publication Manual). Applicants are free to
choose the citation conventions or style guide they prefer, but they must apply them/it consistently throughout the application. If available, a DOI address or another persistent identifier should be used for the literature cited.

2.2.3. Submitting the application

The SFB programme is listed under PROFI programmes. The application must be submitted online at https://elane.fwf.ac.at. To submit the application online, applicants are required to register at the address shown above. All the necessary forms must then be filled out online; additional documents such as the project description can be uploaded. For additional information, see the “Quick reference” guide at https://elane.fwf.ac.at.

1) Required parts of the application:

a) Files:

- Proposal.pdf (project description incl. annexes 1-3 and where applicable 4, with PDF bookmarks, at least for the major sections)
- Publication_list.pdf (publication list of all the key project participants for the last 5 years, broken down into quality assured and non-quality assured)
- Appendix A_B_research organisation A (Commitment of the participating research organisation A; to be designed for each research organisation)

b) Forms:

- Academic abstract in English
- Application form
- Contact form
- Programme specific data form
- Cost breakdown
- Co-authors (mandatory information)
- National and international cooperation arrangements (if applicable)

2) File uploads – if applicable:

- Cover_Letter.pdf (= accompanying letter)
- PhD certificate_name researcher.pdf (=PhD certificate of the researcher)
- Postdoc-research experience_researcher.pdf (= proof of the postdoc experience of the researcher)
- Negative_list.pdf (= list of reviewers who should be excluded)
- Overview_Revision.pdf (= in the case of resubmission, overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application)
The completion of the registration by the researchers must take place on time in order to enable the responsible research institution to approve the applications by 30 September 2021 (2 pm local time, Vienna/Austria).

2.3. Project description

The project description (corresponds to section 2.3.1 to 2.3.4 on max. 15 pages plus section 2.3.5 with one abstract per subproject) must address the following aspects:

2.3.1. Research programme

- Description of the excellent, innovative, scientific/scholarly research to be carried out under the programme according to international standards; description of the state of research, the expected scientific/scholarly progress, the significance of the research results for the international community and the distinction of the work of the SFB in the context of the relevant national and international scientific community. (The most important national and international cooperations are to be listed, the persons to be cooperated with are to be specified and the subject of the intended cooperation(s) or the contribution to the project is to be defined. All of the national and/or international cooperation arrangements that were stated to be essential in the project description should be listed on the cooperation arrangements form and may be evidenced by a collaboration letter);

- Definition of the long-term goals (8 years) of the research programme, which is generally interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary in scope and may also include high-risk elements; definition of the concrete goals of the first application period (4 years);

In the case of an interdisciplinary research approach including:
- Description of the common language (coherent and consistent terminology)
- Description of the research areas to be investigated
- Description of the relevant scientific/scholarly challenges
- Description of the merging of the various disciplinary theories to be combined into a common theoretical approach
- Description of the shared methodologies used
- Presentation of how the synthesis is formed – shared “language” theoretical basis, building on the individual contributions.

- Presentation of the coherence of the subprojects with regard to a coherent interaction of scientific/scholarly competences and work; description of the synergies and added value of the cooperation between all groups;
A separate section must describe what sex-specific and gender-related issues the planned project may potentially give rise to, and how the applicant intends to deal with them. These must be addressed briefly in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any sex-specific and gender-related issues.

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

2.3.2. The Human potential of the SFB

In the sense of the SFB programme, well-networked, efficient researchers, building on their existing expertise, form an excellent research unit with long-term objectives. The quality and composition of the research team must be presented as follows:

- Presentation of the personnel basis of the SFB: previous research achievements of the individual scientists/scholars involved, including allocation to the research programme of the SFB (to the individual subprojects);
  - Description of the proportion of women in the consortium (the failure to achieve 30% participation of women must be justified);
  - a brief description of the situation of the young researchers at the research centres
- Description of an internationalisation strategy to connect with the international scientific/scholarly community
- Presentation of the involvement of doctoral students and postdocs in the research work; description of the training concept for young researchers. In addition to internal SFB training, cooperation with a doctoral programme can and should be sought in conjunction with an SFB; possible considerations in this direction must be mentioned;
- Presentation of the institutions involved (possibly comments on special equipment) and their contribution.

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6 Positioning and reflecting on the research approaches planned for the project in terms of sex-specific and gender-related issues, for instance: Is the research approach likely to produce sex-specific and gender-related findings? If so, what findings? How and where are these integrated into the research approach? (For information on checking the relevance of sex-specific and gender-related issues to a project, see https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/about-the-fwf/gender-issues/fix-the-knowledge/fix-the-knowledge-detail/)

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

8 Once the draft proposal has been approved, the full proposal (i.e. the second stage of the procedure) must include comments on the situation of female researchers and young researchers. Ideally, these are provided by the research institution and contain the following points: Number of female researchers, young researchers, objectives in the women’s promotion plan, objectives in the area of promotion of young researchers at the research institution(s); including references and references to the corresponding documentation.
2.3.3. **Wider impact on the Austrian research system**

- Science Communication: planned publications and conference participations as well as strategies for making the SFB visible in the international scientific community, including a suitable Open Access policy see https://www.fwf.ac.at/de/forschungsfoerderung/open-access-policy/; also strategies to increase the visibility of the Austrian public.

2.3.4. **Organisation and financing structure**

- Summary table showing the total costs applied for, broken down by categories of staff, equipment, material resources and other costs for the first application period;
- Outline presentation of the internal communication, cooperation and information structures of the SFB in order to define the decision-making process in financial and personnel matters;
- Presentation of the gender-equitable working environment and a description of measures to reconcile work and family life. 

Within the framework of the second stage (full proposal of the SFB) of the procedure, it will be necessary to draw up statutes regulating the internal cooperation between the researchers which must be brought to the attention of the lead research institution and the collaborating research institution(s).

2.3.5. **Abstracts of the subprojects**

An abstract for each scientific/scholarly supproject with no more than 3,000 characters (incl. spaces; no formulas or special characters). The abstract must be subdivided into the following sections using the given English terms:

- **Wider research context / theoretical framework**
- **Hypotheses / research questions / objectives**
- **Approach/methods**
- **Level of originality / innovation**
- **Contribution of the project part to the overall project, synergies with other project parts**
- **Researchers**

Where options are given (indicated by slashes), please choose an option that is appropriate

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9 If the draft proposal is approved, detailed descriptions of the planned measures must be submitted in the second stage of the procedure during the preparation of the full proposal. Further explanations on the costs that can be applied for in the order of 20,000 euros per year will be given during Proposers’ Day in the case of an invitation to submit a full proposal.
for your project.

2.4. **Annexes to the project description**

Annexes are not included in the maximum page limit for the project description and must be attached to the project description in the specified order.

2.4.1. **Annex 1: List of references**

- List of literature cited in the application on no more than 5 pages

2.4.2. **Annex 2: Financial aspects**

The template for the description of projected costs can be found in Appendix I.

- Information on the research institution(s)
  - Existing personnel (not financed by the FWF; usually, the researchers and the personnel of the research institutions)
  - Existing infrastructure
- Information on the funding requested
  - Explain briefly why the personnel requested is needed (type(s) of requested position(s), job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project);
  - Explain briefly why the non-personnel cost applied for are justified (equipment, materials, travel, and other costs). If funding for equipment is requested, applicants must explain why this does not constitute part of the basic equipment of the given research environment - see section 2.6.3.

2.4.3. **Annex 3: CVs and description of previous research achievements**

The academic CVs and research achievements (for all participating researchers as well as staff from the postdoc level and up whom are expected to be financed by the project) should be described on no more than three pages per person.

2.4.3.1. **Required contents for academic CVs**

- Name and contact details of the person, address of the research institution, and relevant websites. It is also required to provide a publicly available link (hyperlink) to a list of all publications; the use of ORCID is expressly recommended for this purpose.
- List of academic milestones and relevant positions held to date (with a brief explanation of any career gaps, if applicable).
- Main areas of research and short statement of the most important research results achieved to date.
2.4.3.2. Required description of previous research achievements

- Academic publications: list of no more than ten of the most important published or accepted academic publications (journal articles, monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, preprints, proceedings, etc.), for each publication, if available, either a DOI address or another persistent identifier must be indicated. In accordance with the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), journal-based metrics like the journal impact factor should not be included.

- Additional research achievements: list of no more than ten of the most important scientific/scholarly research achievements apart from academic publications, such as awards, conference papers, keynote speeches, important research projects, research data, software, codes, exhibitions, knowledge transfers, science communication, licenses, or patents.

2.4.4. Annex 4: Collaboration letters

- Confirmations (each no more than 1 page) of national and international cooperation partners that are stated to be essential in the project description, but are no members of the SFB.

2.5. Mandatory Attachments

- Attachment 1: A list of all research publications\(^{10}\) over the last five years (divided into “quality assured publications” and “other publications”, see section 1.6.) must be compiled for all researchers for whom an academic curriculum vitae is enclosed, as well as for all postdocs for whom personnel costs are requested. These lists merged into a document (publication_list.pdf) are to be uploaded. This list – which will not be forwarded to the reviewers – is used to assess applicants’ eligibility and helps the FWF to speed up the process of finding reviewers who do not have a conflict of interest.

- Attachment 2: Commitment of all participating Austrian research institutions:
  Presentation of the planned support by the respective research institutions. Each participating research institution must provide the necessary personnel (Appendix A) and room equipment (Appendix B) for the SFB (see comments on appendix 2).

\(^{10}\) Publication lists must include: all authors, complete titles, journal, year, and page numbers. For each publication, if available, either a DOI address or another persistent identifier should be indicated; for publications with more than 20 authors, an “et al.” reference can be used.
2.6. Eligible project-specific costs

Principle on costs

The regulations of the respective research institution must always be taken into account when applying for funding (such as for personnel and contracts for work and services).

The requested costs for the whole SFB shall be described in Annex 2 and summarised on a spreadsheet (a spreadsheet shall be drawn up in the cost breakdown form).

The only projected costs eligible for funding are those in the following cost categories.

2.6.1. Personnel costs

Only those personnel may be applied for who are needed in addition to the existing personnel resources for the realization of the project and only to the extent required for the project.

The available legal categories of employment are contracts of employment for full-time or part-time employees and marginal employment. A part-time (50%) contract of employment for “student assistants,” which equates to 20 hours per week, may be requested for researchers who have not yet completed a master’s or diploma degree programme in the relevant subject area. A full-time coordinator position (postdoc rate) may be requested to assist the coordinator.

The personnel cost rates that can be applied for within the framework of PROFI, including a fixed percentage increase for the subsequent year to compensate for wage rises, can be found on the FWF-Homepage. Please note that contracts of employment of no more than 75% (which equates to 30 hours per week) may be requested for doctoral students.

2.6.2. Own Position

The FWF understands “own position” to mean that the researcher’s salary is financed from the third-party funds of the research project.

Applying for funding (including part-funding) of one’s own position is possible for every researcher, regardless of whether they are in permanent or long-term employment at the time of application.

A senior postdoc rate can be applied for for one’s own position (correspondingly aliquoted in the case of partial funding):

- Female researchers who finance themselves to the extent of at least 50% through their own position have the additional option of applying for up to EUR 2,000.00 per year in the category "Other costs" for personal coaching and further training measures that directly contribute to the career development of the researcher.
Coaching is understood to mean person-centred counselling and support processes in the professional context. Continuing education measures with eligible costs include courses to acquire scientific—in particular, subject-specific—competences (e.g. courses to acquire methodological competences) and personnel development measures such as those offered at some research institutions (e.g. in the areas of didactics, writing scientific texts and applications—in particular in English—personnel management and project management, conflict and problem solving, scientific organisation as well as vocation training and other seminars directly related to career development, e.g. as part of the promotion of women).

2.6.3. Equipment costs

Equipment may only be requested if it is specifically required for the project and if it is not part of the institution’s existing infrastructure. “Infrastructure” is considered to include all equipment (and components for the equipment) that must be available in a modern research institution to conduct basic research in the relevant discipline at an internationally competitive level. Please note that if such equipment or components are requested nonetheless, doubts may be raised whether it is possible to conduct leading-edge basic research in such an environment (and indeed how it was possible to carry out the preliminary work related to the project in the first place). This may have an impact on the funding decision.

In this context, “equipment” includes scientific instruments, system components, self-constructed devices (generally assembled from smaller pieces of equipment and materials), and other tangible fixed assets as well as intangible assets such as licenses, industrial property rights, and licenses derived from such rights, whose acquisition cost per item exceeds the amount of EUR 1,500.00 (incl. VAT, unless the research institution is entitled to deduct VAT) and where the said equipment is financed primarily (more than 50% of the total costs of the specific item) from FWF funds. A vendor quote from a company (PDF scan) must be uploaded with the full proposal (2nd stage of the evaluation) for each piece of equipment whose acquisition cost (including VAT) exceeds EUR 5,000.00.

For items of equipment which are required specifically for the project and whose acquisition cost (including VAT) is EUR 24,000.00 or higher, the lead research institution must confirm with the application form (Affirmation of the lead research institution) that they have verified that no comparable equipment that could be used or shared is available within a reasonable distance, and that the possibility of (co-)financing by third parties has been explored. The research institution to which the device belongs, must also ensure that they are aware of any possible costs that could arise from the use, maintenance, and repairs of the equipment.

The coordinator is to instruct his/her research institution to order the equipment and effect payment accordingly. In all equipment purchases, the research institution’s procurement guidelines are to be observed. Each item of equipment is to be recorded in the institution’s inventory and the acquisition costs are to be reimbursed from the respective project budget in accordance with the relevant agreement between the research institution and the FWF.
2.6.4. Material costs

“Materials” encompasses consumables and small pieces of equipment (cost per item is below EUR 1,500.00 incl. VAT). The calculation of requested funds for project-specific material costs should be justified with reference to the timelines, work plans, and experiment plans. Experience from previous projects should be considered in making the calculation.

2.6.5. Travel costs

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

Travel expenses for researchers from other Austrian and foreign research institutions can only be granted in exceptional cases and require detailed justification.

The calculation of travel and accommodation costs should generally be based on the federal regulations governing travel costs (RGV). The current RGV rates for travel abroad can be found in the following document.

For longer stays, a transparent and appropriate budget should be prepared; in general, this budget will be lower than the costs calculated based on RGV rates.

Researchers must not request funding for the presentation of project results at conferences; the costs associated with attending such conferences should be covered by the “general project costs”.

2.6.6. Costs as part of national and international cooperation arrangements

Costs arising within the context of a research collaboration with an external research institution are to be borne by that research institution.

Within the context of cooperation arrangements, funds may only be transferred to a cooperation partner (whether or not they are based abroad) if they are clearly limited contracts or services and directly necessary for carrying out the Austrian project. These costs are to be uploaded in the 2nd stage of the procedure by submitting an offer with the full proposal and can be requested under "other costs". This does not apply to cooperation arrangements with scientists or scholars from developing countries.

2.6.7. Other eligible costs

- Independent contracts for work and services (costs for work of clearly defined scope and content carried out by individuals, provided that they are justified in terms of research and are economical);
- Costs for the preparation, archiving, open access, and reuse of research data in repositories in accordance with the FWF’s Open Access Policy;

- Costs that cannot be included under personnel, equipment, materials, or travel costs, for example:
  - Coverage of costs for the use of research facilities, e.g., costs for the project-specific use of available equipment (i.e., project-specific “equipment time”) or of large research facilities; if the costs exceed EUR 5,000.00 including VAT, vendor quotes must be provided with the full proposal (in the 2nd step of the evaluation); please upload a PDF scan. Where the costs exceed EUR 10,000.00 not including VAT (over the entire term of the project), each vendor quote must be accompanied by the corresponding calculation basis. This calculation must include information on the nature and scope of the services for which project-specific costs are incurred (according to internal charging procedures, e.g., based on usage days or hours, or based on the number and type of measurements/analyses performed, etc.) and may not contain any infrastructure-related costs like equipment depreciation, supplementary charges for overheads, costs of research premises, etc.;
  - Costs for any laboratory animals necessary for the project;
  - Costs for project-specific work carried out outside the researcher’s research institution (e.g., for analyses carried out elsewhere, interviews, sample collection, etc.); in case the costs exceed EUR 5,000.00 including VAT, vendor quotes must be provided with the full proposal (in the 2nd step of the evaluation); please upload a PDF scan.;
  - Costs for the disposal of project-specific hazardous waste.
  - Costs for gender equality measures – the SFB can budget a maximum of €20,000 per year for this type of measure within the framework of the current project; the costs are described in the context of the preparation of the full proposal, provided that the concept proposal has been approved and the project has been invited to submit a full proposal.

2.6.8. General project costs

For reasons of simplicity, general project costs refer to all those costs that are generally permitted but cannot be requested separately. These include, for example, costs for conference travel, dissemination activities as well as smaller, unforeseen costs necessary for the project. General project costs should not be understood in the sense of “overhead costs” of the research institution.

General project costs are to be entered in the appropriate field in the Cost breakdown form and calculated as 5% of the total funding requested. No justification for general costs is needed in the project description.
Up to three years after the completion of the project, applicants can apply for additional funds for publications resulting from projects supported by the FWF as part of its peer-reviewed publications programme.

2.7. Forms

All required forms must be completed in their entirety. In order for the application to be legally binding, the FWF requires a completed application form including the "Declaration of the lead research institution and the collaborating research institution(s)."

- Application form (Affirmation of the lead research institution and the collaborating research institution(s))
- Contact form (Names and dates of the responsible persons)
- Programm specific data form (Data of the participating researchers)
- Cost break down (SFB-total costs)
- Co-authors form: All persons who have made substantial research-related contributions to the conception and writing of the application should be named as co-authors. A brief description of the nature of each contribution should be included; where there are no co-authors, applicants should state this explicitly on the form.

2.8. Additional attachments

In addition to the project description incl. annexes and the forms, the following attachments must be uploaded, where applicable:

- Cover letter;

- Only for junior researchers (with at least 2 years research experience): PDF scan of the doctoral certificate and proof of 2 years postdoctoral research experience

- Additional commitment of all participating Austrian research institutions (see Attachment 2, please create Appendix A, B per research institution)

- List of reviewers who should be excluded;

- For the attachments needed when a rejected application is revised and resubmitted, see section 2.9.;

- Vendor quotes\(^\text{11}\) for the requested pieces of equipment whose acquisition cost (including VAT) is EUR 5,000.00 or higher. (Please provide one quote from one company for each piece of requested equipment. These quotes may be submitted in German);

\(^{11}\) Original quotations for equipment must only be submitted as an annex in the course of the full application, i.e. in the second stage of the procedure.
- Vendor quotes\(^{12}\) quotes for any relevant items requested under “Other costs” if the costs exceed EUR 5,000.00 including VAT (e.g., use of research facilities).

It should be noted that any annexes or attachments in addition to the ones mentioned above shall not be considered in further stages of the process (such as letters of recommendation, “forthcoming” publications etc.).

**2.9. Revising a rejected application (“resubmission”)**

A resubmission is defined as the revision of a rejected application which – regardless of the programme category – deals with the same or similar research questions. Where an applicant submits an application on the same or very similar research questions, yet does not consider it to be a resubmission but an entirely new project, the applicant must submit a separate accompanying letter to the FWF Office explaining how the research questions have in fact changed. For example, changes in research methods alone are not sufficient for a proposal to qualify as a completely new project. In cases of doubt, the decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide.

- An accompanying letter containing an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application must be submitted to the FWF. This overview will not be passed on to the reviewers.
- Response(s) to reviews: the applicant can decide whether the response(s) should be passed on only to the relevant previous reviewer concerned or to all reviewers (see section 3.). These response(s) should address the suggestions and criticism expressed in each review of the previous application and point out the changes made on that basis. Such responses are not necessary in the case of reviews written by persons who are to be excluded from the review process for the resubmitted application. However, such exclusions must be justified and will also be counted toward the list of reviewers who are to be excluded for the resubmission.

If all the reviewers are to receive the response(s), the applicant must submit a single document containing an overall response. If the response(s) are to be passed on only to the reviewers who were previously involved, the applicant should include a short response to each review in a separate document.

Resubmissions must show changes. In the case of resubmissions of applications that have been rejected for the standardised reasons C3, C4, and C5, the changes need to be substantial (based on the comments in the reviews). If such changes are not made, the application will be returned without review by the decision-making bodies of the FWF.

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\(^{12}\) Offers for other costs must only be submitted in the original as an annex in the course of the full application, i.e. in the second stage of the procedure.
3. Processing and decision on the application

All applications approved by the research institutions by **30 September 2021 (2 pm local time, Vienna/Austria)** will be formally examined by the FWF Office.

For the evaluation of the draft proposal, 3 independent reviews will be obtained. In the spring of the following year, the FWF Board of the FWF will decide on the draft proposal on the basis of these reviews and, if the decision is positive, the full proposal will be invited. This full proposal must be submitted within 10 weeks.

International experts will be invited to a hearing/virtual meeting to review the full proposal (second stage of the procedure). This international panel discusses with the researchers and research institution and, on the basis of the presentations and discussions, prepares a recommendation for the FWF Board (in a closed session, i.e. in the absence of the FWF Board). The FWF Board will decide on the award in November of the same year, based on this recommendation. The research institutions are informed of the decisions in writing.

*Requests for changes and returning applications without review*

Please note that no changes can be made after the deadline. Any rectifiable deficiencies can only be rectified within a ten-day period after a list of deficiencies has been drawn up and submitted by the FWF Office. If these deficiencies are not remedied within this period, these applications will be dismissed by the FWF bodies.

Applications that have already been rejected by the FWF but are resubmitted but have not been revised will also be dismissed by the FWF decision-making bodies.

All applications that conform with the FWF’s regulations will be sent out for review. The reviewers (generally persons working outside of Austria) will be selected by the members of the FWF Board and confirmed by the FWF’s decision-making bodies.

Once the review process has begun, no more changes can be made to the application. Any changes in the research team must be notified to the FWF immediately during the evaluation period and the FWF’s approval must be obtained.

*Reasons for rejection*

The reasons for rejecting a project will be assigned one of five categories (C1–C5) and will be sent to applicants along with the reviews. A detailed description of the categories can be found in the [General principles of the decision-making procedure](#).

*Resubmissions*

If the application is a resubmission of a previously rejected proposal, the FWF will generally contact those reviewers who provided constructive criticism on the previous application. Reviewers who gave entirely positive or negative comments will generally not be contacted.
for a second review. However, please note that all resubmissions are also evaluated by new reviewers.

Proposal bans

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

Applications that have been submitted three times and rejected for reasons C3 or C4 (with the “three times” referring to the original application and two resubmissions) are also barred for 12 months (from the date of decision). Rejections for reasons C1 or C2 do not count towards this total.

It is only ever topics that are temporarily banned according to these rules, and not applicants.

Exclusion of reviewers

An additional document may be uploaded giving a list of up to three reviewers who the applicant believes may have a conflict of interest and whom the applicant therefore does not wish to review the application. A detailed description of the FWF’s policy on conflicts of interest can be found in the General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure document.

This list may include up to three potential reviewers whom the applicant believes may have conflicts of interests. This selection must be briefly justified. If the reasons for exclusion are professionally and technically sound, the FWF will generally fulfil such requests and will exclude those reviewers from the review process.

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

4. Compliance with legal requirements and standards of research integrity

The FWF would like to point out that the lead research institutions must comply with all legal requirements and safety provisions (e.g., Federal Disabilities Act) that apply for their SFB project and obtain all the necessary permits (e.g., from the Ethics Commission, the Commission for Animal Experimentation, the Federal Monuments Authority Austria, or the relevant foreign authorities).

The lead research institution must also comply with the guidelines for good scientific practice of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI) when submitting the application and carrying out the project.

If there is reason to believe that an applicant has failed to comply with these standards, the FWF will arrange for the ombudsperson of the respective research institution or the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI) to carry out an investigation. The FWF reserves the
right to suspend, in part or in whole, any procedures related to applications or ongoing projects until the investigation has been concluded. For more detailed information, see FWF procedure in cases of suspected scientific misconduct.

5. Publication of project data and results

The FWF would like to point out that should the project be approved, the FWF will publish on its website a summary of the project in German and English for public relations (PR) purposes – which must be sent to the FWF when returning the grant agreement – as well as the amount of funding granted and, on project completion, summaries of the final report of the project. The researchers should ensure that these summaries are written in such a way as to safeguard legitimate interests of secrecy for reasons of national defence and patent law, and that trade secrets are appropriately protected. Guidelines for writing PR summaries can be found here.

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

For any kind of project results (e.g. scholarly publications, research data), researchers must comply with the relevant requirements on acknowledging the FWF as the funding institution and the FWF’s Open Access Policy.
APPENDIX I: Template: Information on the research institution and description of financial aspects

Note: The information on the research institution and the description of financial aspects must be presented using the following structure and appended to the project description as Annex 2. The list and justification of the costs requested must be in accordance with the costs indicated in the form *cost breakdown*.

(a) Details on the lead research institution and the collaborating research institution:

- Existing personnel (not financed by the FWF, usually the researchers and research personnel at the research site(s))
- Existing infrastructure (Note: please describe here the current as well as the future status quo confirmed by Attachment 2)

(b) Information on the funding requested:

- Explain briefly why the personnel requested is needed for the personnel requested (type(s) of requested position(s), job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project);
- Explain briefly why the non-personnel cost applied for are justified (equipment, materials, travel, and other costs). If funding for equipment is requested, applicants must explain why this does not constitute part of the basic equipment of the given research environment – see also section 2.6.3.

List and justification for

Personnel costs:

Equipment costs:

Material costs:

Travel expenses:

Other costs (including independent contracts for work and services):
Attachment 2:

**Comittment of all participating Austrian research institutions**

(Please describe in Attachment 2 what additional infrastructure is provided by the research institution(s). Attachment 2 can be prepared in German, as it remains with the FWF and is not sent to the reviewers)

**Appendix A) Forschungsstätte A–X**

beschreibt die notwendigen Humanressourcen, die der SFB benötigt. Allfällige Modifikationen aufgrund der Begutachtung und Bewilligung durch den FWF sind nachzuverhandeln.

(1) Teilnehmende Personen (seitens der Forschungsstätten zur Verfügung gestellte Personen: Ausgangssituation des SFB)

a. Anzahl der ProfessorInnen  
b. Anzahl der AssistentInnen  
c. Anzahl der nicht wissenschaftlichen Fachkräfte  
Die Personen sind namentlich anzuführen.

(2) Zusätzlich benötigte Personen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forschungsstätte A</th>
<th>Maßnahme</th>
<th>Anzahl</th>
<th>Transfer von Positionen</th>
<th>Neu bzw. Nachbesetzung</th>
<th>Schaffung von neuen Positionen</th>
<th>Umsetzung bis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ProfessorInnen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AssistentInnen</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nicht wissenschaftliche Fachkräfte</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Optional:

(3) Finanzierung von Gastwissenschaftler/inne/n  
a) Anzahl der Wissenschaftler/inne pro Jahr  

(4) Finanzierung von Doktorand/inn/en  
a) Anzahl der Doktorand/inn/en pro Jahr
Appendix B) – Forschungsstätte A–X
beschreibt die notwendige Infrastruktur, die der SFB bei der Schwerpunktbildung an der Forschungsstätte benötigt und die vorrangig zur Verfügung gestellt werden soll.

(1) Vorhandene Laborplätze bzw. Arbeitsplätze
   a) Ausmaß
   b) Qualität und Einrichtung

(2) Zusätzlich benötigter und seitens der Forschungsstätte zur Verfügung gestellter Raumbedarf des SFB F …
   a) Ausmaß
   b) Qualität und Einrichtung
   c) Umsetzung bis: ............................

(3) Spezifikation der Computereinrichtung – Anzahl und Art

(4) Benötigte Großgeräte – Anzahl und Art
   Ankauf bis: ...............................

APPENDIX II: Notes and questions for reviewers in the Special Research programme

The FWF actively supports equal opportunities and fair treatment for all applicants. The FWF does not put researchers at a disadvantage for non-research-related reasons (such as age, gender, etc.) and therefore asks all reviewers to apply the same standards. For example, when assessing researchers’ qualifications, please disregard their actual age, but consider their academic age instead. Our commitment to equal opportunities also means taking into account breaks or delays in researchers’ research careers (e.g., due to parental leave; long-term or chronic illness; disability; caring responsibilities; etc.), which may have led to publication gaps, unorthodox career paths, or limited international research experience.

Only the ten most important academic publications and the ten most important additional research achievements of the researcher are to be considered when evaluating the application. As a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), the FWF also emphasizes that, in assessing research performance, reviewers should refrain from using journal-based metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor.

Please review the present proposal using the following six assessment criteria: 1) quality of the research programme, 2) quality and composition of the research team, 3) further-reaching effects, 4) organisation und financing, 5) ethic and gender und 6) overall evaluation. For each of these criteria except 5) we ask you for both written comments and a rating on a scale from “excellent” to “poor”. Please be aware, however, that the FWF’s funding decision will be based primarily on referees’ written assessments rather than the ratings assigned.

Please keep in mind that sections 1 and 2 will be forwarded to the applicant in its entirety and in anonymous form.

Section 1 (forwarded to the researchers in its entirety):

1. Quality of the SFB research programme
   - Quality of research on which the SFB is based (international competitiveness, scientific/scholarly innovation potential)
   - Thematic coherence and expected added value of the SFB

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13 Further information on the FWF’s corporate policy and mission or the application guidelines for Stand-Alone projects can be found on our website at [http://www.fwf.ac.at/de/ueber-den-fwf/leitbild/](http://www.fwf.ac.at/de/ueber-den-fwf/leitbild/) and [https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/special-research-programmes-sfb/](https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/special-research-programmes-sfb/)

14 The project proposal must meet the FWF’s formal requirements. Please bear these in mind when writing your review. (Key formal requirements: Project description incl. figures and tables max. 15 pages plus 1 abstract per subproject, list of literature relevant to the project on max. 5 pages; CVs and presentation of the previous research achievements of all researchers incl. the 10 most important publications on max. three pages each. For further details see SFBs [fwf.ac.at](http://www.fwf.ac.at).
2. **Quality and composition of the research team**
   - Subproject managers: scientific/scholarly potential (quality and international reputation), available research capacity;
   - Gender ratio;
   - Proportion of young researchers as project managers
   - Involvement of young researchers as staff

3. **Wider impacts**
   - Dissemination strategies including a suitable open-access policy and academic communication: quality of the measures with regard to the profile of the SFB in every respect, also beyond the scientific/academic field (contribution to public awareness of research).

4. **Organisation and financing**
   - Quality of the organisational concept, above all with regard to the organisation of internal coherence, cooperation within the SFB and consistency with the planned project duration (short- and long-term work planning);
   - Quality of network structures (communication and information paths) and the formal framework.

5. **Ethics and gender:**
   - Ethics: Have ethical considerations been addressed satisfactorily?
   - Gender: Researchers are required to address any relevant sex-specific and/or gender-related elements inherent in their research questions and/or research design. Please assess whether their treatment of these components is adequate.

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

**Section 2: Optional recommendations for the researchers**

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

**Section 3: Confidential remarks to the FWF**

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