

NEUES ENTDECKEN

TALENTE FÖRDERN

IDEEN UMSETZEN

FWF

Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

In accordance with its Funding Guidelines of 1 January 2019
(as last amended), the FWF has issued the following

Application Guidelines for the START Programme



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1. General Information

1.1. Aim of the programme

The fundamental aim of the programme is the promotion of young researchers with at least two and at most eight years of postdoctoral experience who have already produced scientific/scholarly work of a top international standard and whose research careers to date make it likely that they will continue to perform first-rate research in the future.

Top-class research is the result of teamwork by top-class people. The project funding, which amounts between EUR 800,000 up to EUR 1.2 Mio (around EUR 200,000 p.a.) is designed to provide financial security for a period of six years and to enable project leaders independently to build up or consolidate and lead research groups, thereby qualifying themselves for senior research positions (especially as university professors within Austria or abroad).

The programme is targeted at highly qualified researchers of any discipline. There are no quotas regulating the distribution of awards between subject areas. Priority will be given to applicants, who are in an early stage of their career and have not yet received any third-part funding in programmes with similar aims and comparable funding amounts¹, e.g. „ERC Starting or ERC Consolidator Grants“.

The START-programme is one of the most generously supported research programmes for individual researchers working in Austria. As such, it attracts considerable media attention and thus contributes significantly to the understanding and acceptance of scientific research by society.

1.2. Deadlines

Deadline: Applications must be submitted to the FWF (Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung - Austrian Science Fund) in English by **20th September 2019 (Deadline for submitting applications via the electronic application portal Elane is 12:59 CET)**.

Once the application has been finally submitted in Elane, a PDF cover sheet can be generated. This cover sheet must be signed, stamped, and sent to the FWF by conventional mail by **20th September** at the latest (date of postmark). The application is not officially considered to be "submitted" until the FWF receives the cover sheet. Alternatively, the signed/stamped cover sheet can be scanned in, signed using the applicant's qualified

¹ The criterion third-part funding in programmes with similar aims and comparable funding will not be taken into account, if the comparable grant is close to the end or already finished.

electronic signature² (e.g. Handysignatur) and sent to the FWF by e-mail (office@fwf.ac.at) at **20th September 2019**. Please note that a signed/stamped version of the cover sheet without a qualified electronic signature will not suffice!

1.3. Who is eligible to apply?

Applications for grants in the START-Programme can only be submitted by individuals (natural persons).

- The call is open to any researcher with a PhD or MD degree; the doctoral degree must have been completed (award of certificate) no less than two years and no longer than eight years before the deadline for submission of applications (20th September 2019). Proven time spent raising children will be considered as interruptions to scientific/scholarly activity and up to three years will be allowed per child cared for by the applicant. Proven time spent on compulsory military or civilian service, time required to obtain corresponding specific qualifications in the relevant field (e.g. for receiving clinical qualifications) and long-term illness, will also be taken into account.
- Applicants must have the necessary scientific/scholarly qualification (postdoctoral experience), to perform the project. All applicants are expected to submit evidence of independent scientific/scholarly activity as well as an outstanding track record in the form of publications in international journals and/or internationally recognised contributions to the development of the field. In general, a period of at least one year's research abroad is also necessary and applicants should have already acquired competitive third-party funds independently³ since earning their doctorate.
- The project supported by the project money must be carried out in Austria or under the responsibility of an Austrian research institution. The Austrian research institution must confirm that the necessary infrastructure to perform the research will be available for the entire duration of the project.

Notwithstanding the undertaking that an application with an identical content will be submitted to the ERC (see [1.7](#)), double funding is not permitted (see [FWF funding guidelines](#)).

Where additional funding applications are submitted to other FWF Programmes, those applications must differ substantially from the planned START project in terms of research questions and objectives. Applications which include work already proposed for a START project and are excessively similar to the START project will not be considered by the FWF Board. The sole exception to this rule is the Elise Richter Programme, where an application which is substantially similar in content as long as the programme-specific guidelines are

² <https://www.digital.austria.gv.at/mobile-phone-signature>

³ Research projects etc. for which the applicant is/was the main person responsible for the project in terms of both planning and execution.

observed.

It should be noted that each applicant may submit only one application per call for proposals under the START programme.

1.4. What types of projects can be funded?

The project should be in the field of non-profit-oriented scientific/scholarly research and it must be planned for a duration of 72 months; the goals and methodology of the project should be precisely described. Non-profit oriented scientific/scholarly research is research whose value is primarily related to the importance for the further development of research (scientific/scholarly work directed at enhancing our understanding of the field).

Any aspects of a research project that go beyond basic research (results of relevance to society, to the environment or to the economy) may be mentioned, although they play no part in the assessment of whether the project should be funded.

An interim evaluation after three years gives Prizewinners the chance to adapt their research to accommodate any changes in the field.

1.5. What requirements must be met to apply?

The applicant's qualifications to carry out the research work should be demonstrated by publications in internationally recognised journals (the number of which should correspond to the stage the applicant has reached in his/her career). The following criteria are decisive in the assessment of the applicant's research qualifications and determine whether a review procedure is initiated:

- **Peer review:** All the publications listed (or more than half in the case of the humanities) must have been subject to a quality assurance procedure in line with high international standards, which usually means that journals should be listed in the Web of Science, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). For journals not listed in those databases, or monographs, edited volumes or contributions therein, or other publication types, the peer-review procedure must be documented on the publisher's website to which applicants should provide a link. Should no such documentation be available on the website, it is the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence that the publication has been subject to an appropriate quality assurance procedure.
- **Number and quality** of the applicant's publications must be commensurate with his/her career stage but in any case it should meet the high requirements of the programme. At least two publications must be peer-reviewed and internationally visible publications with a substantial and independent contribution on the part of the applicant. Applicants should review the profiles of previous START recipients (<http://pf.fwf.ac.at/en/research-in-practice/project-finder>) or ERC Starting Grantees (<https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>) for guidance in this regard.

- **International nature:** In the natural sciences, life sciences, and social sciences, most of the publications listed must be in English. In the humanities and cultural studies, as well as arts-based research, most of the applicant's publications must have a wider than national reach.

Should an applicant fail to meet one or more of the above criteria, the applicant 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. 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 and that go beyond the resources provided by the infrastructure of the research institution. The amount of funding requested must be between EUR 800,000 and EUR 1,200,000 for the entire funding period.

For information on requesting funding for the personnel costs of the principal investigator (= applicants who intend their salary to be paid from the grant), see [Information on funding the principal investigator's \(PI's\) salary](#).

The National Research Partner form should be completed for costs arising from the collaboration with national research partners that have to be handled directly between the research institution of the national research partner and the FWF and are not invoiced to the principal investigator.

1.7. START and ERC Starting Grant

With the submission of a START application, the applicant commits him- or herself – provided that there is no formal reason why this may not be done – to submitting an application with the same content within the next possible call⁴ for ERC-Starting Grants. Further information about the ERC Funding Schemes may be found at <http://erc.europa.eu/funding-schemes>.

2. Application content and form

2.1. Sections of the application

A complete application must include the following parts:

- 1) **Academic abstract** in **English** comprising no more than **3,000 characters** (incl. spaces);

⁴ Applicants are requested to submit their ERC Starting Grant proposal with similar content at the next possible deadline (October 2019).

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
- Primary researchers involved

2) **Project description** with no more than 55,000 characters (including spaces) on no more than 22 consecutively numbered pages, incl. table of contents, list of abbreviations headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.;

3) **Annexes and Attachments**

Please note that annexes are a part of the application and they must be attached to the project description (*proposal.pdf*) in the order listed below (see also [Section 2.4.](#)):

- **Annex 1:** Information on research institution(s) and justification of requested funding;
- **Annex 2:** List of literature cited in the application (*References*) on no more than 5 pages;
- **Annex 3:** Academic curriculum vitae (hereinafter referred to as CV) and description of previous research achievements of the applicant (no more than 3 pages per CV);
- **Annex 4:** Letter of recommendation
- **Annex 5:** Confirmations (collaboration letters) of national and international cooperation partners (no more than 1 page per letter);
- **Attachments** to be uploaded individually:
Mandatory: publication list of the applicant for the last 5 years, broken down into peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed see also [Section 2.5](#).
Where applicable: cover letter; list of reviewers to be excluded; report on results or final report for follow-up applications (see also [Section 3](#)); for resubmissions: overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application and response(s) to reviews; etc.

4) **Completed forms**

- Required forms: *academic abstract*, *application form*, *programme specific form*, *Cost breakdown form* and *Co-authors form*;
- Optional forms: *National research partners form*, *National / International cooperation arrangements form*.

2.2. Form requirements

2.2.1. Language of application

To allow applications to be reviewed by international experts, applications must be submitted 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. The beginning of each paragraph should be clearly recognisable (e.g., by indenting the first line and/or spaces between paragraphs). 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 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 1-4 and where applicable 5, with PDF bookmarks, at least for the major sections)
- **Publication_list.pdf** (publication list of the applicant for the last 5 years, broken down into peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed)

b) Forms:

- *Application form*
- *Programme specific data*
- *Academic abstract in English*

- *Cost breakdown*
- *Co-authors (mandatory information)*
- *National research partners (optional)*
- *National and international cooperation arrangements (optional)*

2) Optional file uploads

- *Cover_Letter.pdf* (= accompanying letter)
- *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)
- *Revision.pdf* (=in the case of resubmission, an overall response to all the reviewers or, if preferred, a short response to *each* reviewer saved in a separate file: *Revision_A.pdf*, *Revision_B.pdf* etc.)

Once the application has been finally submitted in Elane (**deadline 20th September 2019, 12:59 pm CET**), a PDF cover sheet can be generated. This cover sheet must be signed, stamped, and sent to the FWF by conventional mail by **20th September** at the latest (date of postmark). The application is not officially considered to be "submitted" until the FWF receives the cover sheet. Alternatively, the signed/stamped cover sheet can be scanned in, signed using the applicant's qualified electronic signature⁵ (e.g. mobile phone signature) and sent to the FWF by e-mail (office@fwf.ac.at) at **20th September**. Please note that a signed/stamped version of the cover sheet without a qualified electronic signature will not suffice!

2.3. Project description

The description of the project on no more than 55,000 characters incl. spaces on no more than 22 pages must include the following contents:

2.3.1. Scientific/scholarly aspects

- Clearly defined aims and hypotheses or research question(s) of the project
- Description of the project's anticipated level of originality or scientific/scholarly innovation⁶

⁵ <https://www.digital.austria.gv.at/mobile-phone-signature>

⁶ Examples of projects worthy of funding include, among others:

- Research on new ideas and/or examination of new research questions,
- Application or development of new research methods, new technologies, or original approaches to solving research questions,

- Relevance to international research in the field (international state of research)
- Methods
- Intended cooperation arrangements (national and/or international) as part of the planned project should be explained in the project description. This explanation should specify the people with whom the cooperation arrangement shall take place and the subject of the intended cooperation arrangement(s) or the contribution to the project. 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 be evidenced by a collaboration letter.
- Work plan and timeline
- All potential ethical, safety-related, or regulatory aspects⁷ of the submitted project and the planned handling of them must be described in a separate section. This aspect should be addressed briefly in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any ethical issues.
- All potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects⁸ in the planned project as well as the planned implementation of these research questions must be described in a separate section. This aspect should be addressed briefly in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any sex-specific and gender-related issues.

2.3.2. Human resources

- academic qualifications of the researchers involved
- importance of the project for the career development of the applicant

2.4. Annexes to the project description

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

-
- Application or modification of existing methods, technologies, or approaches to new research questions. Please note that the next logical step or the incremental further development of published data is not considered to be innovative or original.

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 Positioning and reflecting on the research approaches in the 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/>)

2.4.1. Annex 1: Financial aspects

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

- Information on the research institution and those of the national research partners
 - Available personnel (not financed by the FWF; usually, the principal investigator and the personnel of the research institutions)
 - Available infrastructure
- Information on the funding requested
 - Concise justifications for the personnel requested (type(s) of requested position(s), job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project);
 - Concise justifications for non-personnel cost (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](#).

2.4.2. Annex 2: List of references

- List of literature⁹ cited in the application on no more than 5 pages

2.4.3. Annex 3: Academic CV

The academic CV and research achievements for the principal investigator 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 to a list of all published 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 scientific/scholarly results achieved to date.

⁹ The list of literature must include the following information: All authors, complete titles, journal, year and page numbers. It is also necessary to provide each publication's DOI address or another persistent identifier, e.g. the PubMed ID, arxiv ID, URL, URN or ISBN.

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, proceedings, etc.), for each publication, either a [DOI address](#) or another [persistent identifier](#) should 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, preprints, exhibitions, knowledge transfers, science communication, licenses, or patents.

2.4.4. **Annex 4: Letter of recommendation**

- A letter of recommendation from the head or the group leader of the research institute, where the project will be hosted. The person writing the letter may send it directly to the FWF Secretariat.

2.4.5. **Annex 5: 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.

2.5. **Mandatory attachment: Publication list**

A list of all published publications¹⁰ of the last five years (divided into peer reviewed and non-peer-reviewed) of the applicant (Publication_list.pdf).

This list helps the FWF to determine if there are any potential conflicts of interest with reviewers and thus speeds up the process of identifying reviewers. This list will not be forwarded to the reviewers.

2.6. **Eligible project-specific costs**

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

¹⁰ Publication list must include: all authors, complete titles, journal, year, and page numbers. For each publication, 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.

2.6.1. Personnel costs

The application should include all persons, in addition to the staff already available, who will be required for the proposed project and who will work exclusively on the proposed project.

The available legal categories of employment are contracts of employment for full- or part-time employees (DV) and reimbursement for work on an hourly basis (GB). In addition, a part-time contract of employment (DV 50%, “studentische MitarbeiterInnen”) may be requested for people who have not yet completed a master’s or diploma programme (Diplom) in the relevant subject.

The current FWF salary scheme (“[personnel costs and salary scale](#)” or for graduates of medicine in Austria “[Personnel costs / Salaries for Graduates of Medical Studies in Austria](#)”) indicates the salaries that may be requested. (<http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/personnel-costs/>)

The FWF grants an annual increase to compensate for inflation; this is applied automatically to all contracts of employment in START projects that are valid when the increase is effected.

2.6.2. Grant-salaried principal investigators:

The FWF defines a grant-salaried principal investigator as a principal investigator whose salary is to be paid from the funding provided for the project. Female applicants are also eligible to apply for funding for professional development.

A detailed description of the requirements and application procedure can be found in the [Information on funding the principal investigator’s \(PI’s\) salary](#).

2.6.3. Equipment costs

Equipment may only be requested if it is specifically required for the project

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 specified in Article 13 of the Austrian Income Tax Act 1988 as last amended, Federal Law Gazette No. 400/1988, which is currently EUR 400.00 (incl. VAT, unless the research institution is entitled to deduct VAT).

For items of equipment which are required specifically for the project and whose acquisition cost (including VAT) is EUR 24,000.00 or higher, applicants must confirm with their signatures on the application form (*Affirmation of applicant*) 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. Applicants must also ensure that they are aware of any possible costs that could arise from the use, maintenance, and repairs of the equipment.

The principal investigator 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

This category encompasses consumables and smaller pieces of equipment where the cost per item is below EUR 400.00 including VAT. The calculation of requested material costs should be justified with reference to the schedule, work plan and experimental plan. Experience from previous projects should be taken into account.

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.

2.6.6. Costs as part of national and international cooperation arrangements

In contrast to national research partners (see [Section 1.6](#)), 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 (also abroad) if they are clearly limited contracts or services and directly necessary for carrying out the Austrian project. 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 economical);
- Costs for the preparation, archiving, open access, and reuse of research data in repositories in accordance with the [Open Access Policy](#) of the FWF;
- 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 (project-specific “equipment time”) or large research facilities; in any case, vendor quotes should be provided. 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 overhead, costs of research premises, etc.;
 - Costs for any laboratory animals necessary for the project;
 - Costs for project-specific work carried out outside the applicant’s research institution (e.g., for analysis work performed elsewhere, interviews, sample collection, preparation of thin slices, etc.); vendor quotes should be uploaded;
 - Costs for the disposal of project-specific hazardous waste.

2.7. Forms

All required forms must be completed in their entirety. In order for the application to be legally binding, the FWF requires the PDF cover sheet with original signatures and an original stamp or seal. The blank cover sheet can be generated once the application has been completed (elane cover sheet).

- Affirmation of applicant,
- Affirmation of applicant’s research institution,
- Declaration of the applicant on the GDPR,
- if applicable, a copy of the Affirmation of national research partner(s),
- if applicable, the Affirmation of the national research partner’s (partners’) research institution.

In addition the commitment to submit an identical ERC-Starting Grant within the next possible call must also be signed by the applicant.

Form *co-authors*: All persons who have made substantial scientific/scholarly contributions to the application, either at its conception or during its writing, should be named. 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 and the forms, the following attachments should be uploaded, where applicable:

- Cover letter;
- List of reviewers who should be excluded;
- Vendor quotes for any relevant items requested under “Other costs” (e.g., use of research facilities),
- Evidence of periods of child care, compulsory military or civilian service, or time spent obtaining qualifications/training relevant to the field of research or for long-term illness should be submitted if the maximum permitted time since conferment of the doctoral degree is exceeded,

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 publications not yet published).

2.9. Revising a rejected application (“resubmission”)

A resubmission is defined as the revision of an application which has already been rejected with the same or similar research questions, regardless of the programme category. 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 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.

If the project submitted is a resubmission of a rejected application,

- this should be indicated at the beginning of the project description (e.g., in a footnote).
- 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 is (are) to be made:

The applicant can decide whether the response(s) should be passed on to the relevant previous reviewer or 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 should be excluded for the resubmission.

If all the reviewers are to receive this response, the applicant must submit a document containing an overall response.

If these responses 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.

3. Processing and decision on the application

A formal check of all applications submitted within the deadline is undertaken by the FWF Secretariat. Please note that no alterations may be made to the application after the submission deadline. The date of the postmark of the consignment (= final PDF cover sheet with original signatures and stamp of the research institution) serves as proof of timely submission.

All applications that meet the relevant research and formal criteria will be sent to reviewers (invariably working outside Austria) nominated by the FWF Board and the International Jury.

Decisions on the award of START grants are taken by the Board of the FWF based on recommendations of the International Jury. The recommendation of the Jury is based on the results of the international peer review and an interview, which will take place on the first day of the annual meeting of the International Jury. The meeting of the Jury usually lasts two days. The International Jury prepares a short-list of promising START candidates before the meeting (generally three to four weeks in advance). These candidates are invited to an interview during the Jury meeting. At the same time, applicants who are not on the shortlist are informed of the decision and receive the reviews of their applications, in anonymous form. The International Jury reaches its list of recommendations in a closed session, i.e. in the absence of the FWF Board.

Applicants are informed of the decisions in writing.

For a positive decision at least three reviews are needed.

Requests for changes and returning applications without review

The FWF Office undertakes a formal check of the application. Incomplete applications or those which do not comply with the FWF's regulations or which contain formal errors (in particular, those which exceed the permitted length) will be returned. If the problems identified in an application are not rectified within a reasonable period of time (no more than ten calendar days after notification), the decision-making bodies of the FWF will return these proposals without review. Similarly, the decision-making bodies of the FWF will return without review applications that have been previously rejected by the FWF and resubmitted without appropriate revisions.

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

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

The most common reasons why applications are returned without review by the decision-making bodies of the FWF are (a) that the applicant's track record of publications does not meet the requirements (see [Section 1.5](#)) and (b) that the application is missing specific hypotheses or research questions (see [Section 2.3](#)).

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 from resubmission for at least 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 (i.e., the original application and the respective resubmissions) are also barred for 12 months (from the date of decision); rejections for reasons C1 or C2 do not count towards this total.

Exclusion of reviewers

Applicants may include a separate document with a list of reviewers who should not be asked to review the application due to possible conflicts of interest. A detailed description of

the FWF's rules concerning conflicts of interests can be found in the [General principles of the decision-making procedure](#).

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 applicants must comply with all legal requirements and safety provisions (e.g., Federal Disabilities Act) that apply for their Stand-Alone 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).

Applicants 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 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 principal investigator 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.

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 at <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/open-access-policy/research-data-management/>.

In presentations and publications of project results (e.g. scholarly publications, research data), applicants 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 shall be presented using the following structure and appended as Annex 1 to the project description. 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 research institution of the applicant and of national research partners:

- Existing personnel (not financed by the FWF, usually the principle investigator and research personnel at the research site(s))
- Existing infrastructure

(b) Information on the funding requested:

- Concise justifications for the personnel requested (type(s) of requested position(s), job descriptions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project);
- Concise justifications for non-personnel cost (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 of the personnel costs applied for:

List and justification of the equipment costs applied for:

List and justification of the material costs applied for:

List and justification of the travel expenses applied for:

List and justification of other costs applied for:

APPENDIX II: Guidelines for FWF Reviewers “START Programme”¹¹

In all of its programmes, the FWF actively supports equal opportunities and equal treatment. The review of an application must not put applicants at a disadvantage for non-research-related reasons such as age, gender, etc. For example, the review of applications should not focus on the applicant’s actual age, but on the relation between the applicant’s previous research achievements and the length of his/her research career. For the FWF, equal opportunities also means taking into account any unavoidable delays in applicants’ research careers that have led to publication gaps, less time spent abroad, etc. (e.g., due to well-founded, extended qualification periods; time spent raising children; long-term illness; caring for relatives; etc.).

In writing your review, please keep in mind that your comments in the first section of the review will be forwarded to the applicant and, where applicable, other reviewers, in an anonymous way.

The FWF would like to point out that the length and the form of the project proposal must fulfil the form requirements¹² of the FWF, and therefore we ask that you keep these restrictions in mind when writing your review.

The FWF is obligated to ensure the best possible use of public-sector funds for basic research according to scientific/scholarly research criteria. We therefore ask you to comment on the following aspects of the application in Section 1a. What are the specific strengths of the project? Does it have weaknesses, and if so, what are they?

Section 1a (forwarded to the applicant in its entirety):

1. Research-related qualifications of the applicant (in relation to the length of his/her career) and potential to independently build up or consolidate his/her own research group
2. Level of originality or scientific/scholarly innovation of the application
3. Scientific/Scholarly quality of the proposal
4. Approaches/Methods and feasibility of the proposal
5. Additional aspects:
 - Ethical aspects
 - Sex-specific and gender-related aspects

¹¹ Information about the FWF’s ‘Corporate Policy’ and a copy of the ‘Guidelines for START Applications’ may be found on the FWF’s website (<http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/about-the-fwf/corporate-policy/> or <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/start-programme/>).

¹² Form requirements: Project description incl. figures and tables, no more than 22 pages; list of literature cited no more than 5 pages; academic CVs and description of previous research achievements of the PI incl. the 10 most important publications on no more than 3 pages.

6. Overall evaluation with regard to key strengths and weaknesses and final funding recommendation

Section 1b (optional remarks to the applicant)

Reviewer's recommendations to the applicants for implementing the project (in the case of approval). The recommendations made here generally should not play a role in the funding decision.

Section 2 (confidential remarks to the FWF)

Other comments intended solely for the FWF.