In accordance with its Funding Guidelines of January 1, 2022 (as amended), the FWF has issued the following Application Guidelines for the doc.funds.connect program for Cooperative Doctoral Education between Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities
Introduction

Science & research, tertiary education, and research-generated innovations are key elements in ensuring a future-oriented Austria. The quality and excellence produced at and by Austrian universities and universities of applied sciences in the fields of research and teaching are essential components in achieving this ambitious goal.

With the aim of strengthening these institutions’ profiles and exploiting synergies, the federal government established a government program for the period 2020–2024, committed to promoting cooperative doctorates between universities under the Universities Act 2002 (Universitätsgesetz 2002, UG) and universities of applied sciences under the University of Applied Sciences Act (Fachhochschulgesetz, FHG) on the common basis of interlinking basic research and applied research. The main objective is to establish application-oriented basic research.

Both as a personnel development measure for academic staff, especially at universities of applied sciences, and as a measure to encourage closer cooperation between universities and universities of applied sciences, this call for proposals will fund joint projects between public universities and universities of applied sciences to strengthen the already successful cooperation in doctoral education between these institutions. The funded cooperative projects will be jointly developed and implemented by the higher education partners, and each institution will contribute its specific expertise and unique aspects of its university culture to jointly ensure the quality of the doctoral education and training offered by the program.
Table of contents

1. General information ........................................................................................................... 4
  1.1. Program Objectives ........................................................................................................ 4
  1.2. Definitions .................................................................................................................... 4
  1.3. Deadlines .................................................................................................................... 5
  1.4. Who is eligible to apply? .............................................................................................. 5
  1.5. For what types of projects can funding be requested? .................................................... 5
  1.6. What requirements must be met to apply? ................................................................... 6
       1.6.1. General framework ............................................................................................... 6
       1.6.2. Structured doctoral program .............................................................................. 7
       1.6.3. Faculty .................................................................................................................. 8
       1.6.4. Research or arts-based research qualifications and supervision or assessment experience ......................................................................................................................... 8
       1.6.5. Consideration of career breaks ............................................................................ 10
       1.6.6. Inclusion of the disabled and chronically ill ......................................................... 10
       1.6.7. Multiple participation .......................................................................................... 10
  1.7. What types of funding can be requested? ...................................................................... 11
       1.7.1. Personnel costs .................................................................................................... 11
       1.7.2. Costs for education and training ......................................................................... 11
       1.7.3. General project costs .......................................................................................... 12
  2. Application content and form ........................................................................................... 12
     2.1. Sections of the application ......................................................................................... 12
     2.2. Form requirements ..................................................................................................... 14
       2.2.1. Language of application .................................................................................... 14
       2.2.2. Formatting .......................................................................................................... 14
       2.2.3. Submitting the application ................................................................................ 15
     2.3. Project description ..................................................................................................... 16
       2.3.1. Research framework (max. 9 pages) ................................................................ 16
       2.3.2. Faculty (max. 4 pages) ..................................................................................... 17
       2.3.3. Education and training program (max. 9 pages) .............................................. 18
       2.3.4. Organizational structure and contribution of research institutions (max. 4 pages) 19
       2.3.5. Added value (max. 4 pages) .............................................................................. 20
  2.4. Annexes to the project description ............................................................................... 20
     2.4.1. Annex 1: List of references .................................................................................. 20
     2.4.2. Annex 2: Information on and justification for requested funding ...................... 20
     2.4.3. Annex 3: CVs and description of previous research achievements .................. 21
     2.4.4. Annex 4: Collaboration letters ............................................................................ 22
  2.5. Required attachments (uploaded separately) ................................................................. 22
     2.5.1. Attachment 1: Planned dissertation projects ...................................................... 22
     2.5.2. Attachment 2: List of doctoral candidates supervised over the last five years .... 22
     2.5.3. Attachment 3: Publication or works list for the last five years .......................... 22
  2.6. Forms ............................................................................................................................ 23
  2.7. Additional attachments ............................................................................................... 23
  2.8. Revising a rejected application (resubmission) ............................................................ 24
  3. Processing and decision on the application .................................................................... 25
  4. Compliance with legal requirements and standards of research integrity ....................... 26
  5. Publication of project data and results ............................................................................ 27
Appendix: Notes and questions for reviewers in the doc.funds.connect program ................. 28
1 General information

1.1 Program objectives

The main objective of the doc.funds.connect program is to fund excellent scientific/scholarly or arts-based research education and training of doctoral candidates in cooperative doctoral programs between universities according to the University Act 2002 and universities of applied sciences under the University of Applied Sciences Act. To accomplish this aim, universities and universities of applied sciences will establish or expand jointly developed and organized doctoral programs based on international standards. The doc.funds.connect program endeavors to integrate both scientific/scholarly-theoretical education and practical training as well as basic research and applied research with the aim of establishing application-oriented basic research. The shared use of the infrastructure of universities and universities of applied sciences contributes to the establishment of a stimulating research environment for excellent young researchers, further increasing the attractiveness of Austria as a research location.

At the same time, however, the funding program is also intended to support the development of academic staff at universities of applied sciences in accordance with the Universities of Applied Sciences Act and to link different research cultures. In the long term, doc.funds.connect should contribute to the creation of sustainable cooperative education, training, and research structures and promote cooperation between universities of applied sciences and universities in general. The program is also intended to help universities and universities of applied sciences further strengthen their research activities and scientific/scholarly or arts-based research priorities.

The doc.funds.connect program is designed as a pilot program. The program will also strive to serve as a role model with regard to improving the quality of cooperative doctoral education and training.

1.2 Definitions

The most important terms used in these guidelines are defined below:

| Lead research institution (= the research institution applying for funding) | Austrian university pursuant to the Universities Act 2002 (UG) or university of applied sciences pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (FHG), which submits the application and where the coordinator is employed |
| Partner research institution | Austrian research institution that is involved in the application and where participating faculty members work |
1.3 Deadlines

The deadline for submission (i.e., approval by the lead research institute) is **March 20, 2023 (2:00 pm CET)**. Applications must be submitted online using the electronic application portal elane.

1.4 Who is eligible to apply?

All Austrian universities according to the Universities Act and all Austrian universities of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act are eligible to apply.

There is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted by a research institution. Grant agreements are concluded exclusively with the lead research institution.

1.5 For what types of projects can funding be requested?

Funding may be requested for proposals for **establishing or facilitating structured doctoral programs** which are submitted and supported jointly by at least one university under the Universities Act and at least one university of applied sciences under the Universities of Applied Sciences Act. The cooperative research project, which must be clearly defined, convincingly described in terms of objectives and methods, and limited in time (no more than 48 months), must aim to integrate basic research and applied research and establish application-oriented basic research. The planned project should be designed in such a way that excellent dissertations based on state-of-the-art international research can be expected.

Multiple funding is not permitted (see Funding Guidelines).
Any other support or grants for the project that have been requested or awarded by the FWF or other funding bodies (e.g., the EU, the OeNB, government ministries, etc.) must be disclosed (see the Application form in elane).

**No additional funding** may be requested from the doc.funds.connect program for ongoing FWF-funded Doctoral Programs, doc.funds.connect, or doc.funds projects. An application for these projects can only be submitted to the doc.funds.connect program if the scheduled duration of the FWF-funded Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project ends on or before the deadline for doc.funds.connect applications (**March 20, 2023**).

Proposals that are thematically related to ongoing doc.funds or doc.funds.connect projects must also meet **all** of the following requirements in addition to those defined in the application guidelines:

- **Research program:** The research and research questions in the proposal are clearly different from those of the ongoing doc.funds or doc.funds.connect project.

- **Faculty:** The majority (at least 50%) of the faculty is not made up of faculty members involved in the current doc.funds or doc.funds.connect project. If the total number of faculty is higher than in the current doc.funds or doc.funds.connect project, grounds for this increase must be provided.

The difference to the ongoing project must be explicitly and clearly explained in the application. If only one of the above-mentioned requirements is not met or if there are reasonable doubts about the difference between the proposal and the existing project, the application can be returned without review.

### 1.6 What requirements must be met to apply?

#### 1.6.1 General framework

The doc.funds.connect program provides funding for cooperative projects between universities according to the Universities Act and universities of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act for the purpose of establishing or expanding a structured doctoral program. Applications **must be submitted and, if approved, implemented jointly** by the participating partners (consisting of at least one university of applied sciences and at least one university), where each research institute will contribute its specific expertise and unique aspects of its university culture and jointly ensure the quality of the doctoral education and training offered by the program.

The application should include a description of the inter-university cooperation and a plan for implementing the joint doctoral education and training program. It should also address how it will be ensured that the doctoral candidates, although working in different locations, will have the opportunity to be in contact and interact with the faculty members or doctoral candidates in the other location(s), both virtually and in person.
Doctoral candidates should be supervised jointly, i.e., by research staff of the universities and the universities of applied sciences. Doctoral candidates should preferably be employed at the research institution with the best conditions for the success of the dissertation based on the subject of the research project. However, it must also be ensured that there is a balanced ratio of employment between the university and the university of applied sciences. The number of doctoral program courses held at the universities and at the universities of applied sciences should be equally balanced. Both should be specified in a cooperation agreement.

The academic degree (PhD), however, will be conferred by the participating university.

The following requirements apply for the structured doctoral program defined jointly by the university according to the Universities Act and the university of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act:

### 1.6.2 Structured doctoral program

Structured doctoral programs are embedded in a focused and consistent research framework. They also feature procedures or structures and commitments that ensure the quality of the research, as well as optimal and appropriate scientific/scholarly or arts-based research support for doctoral candidates.

The following specific minimum structuring standards apply: Supervision confirmation; dissertation agreement; progress reports; supervision and evaluation of dissertations performed by different people (if compliant with study-law regulations); subject-specific education and supporting measures (transferable skills, etc.); supervision teams rather than exclusively individual supervision; supervisor development; mobility options, and specific funding models for doctoral candidates.

In particular, contexts must be created for doctoral candidates and supervisors in which mentoring and appropriate discussion can take place as part of a peer culture (see section 2.3.4). These contexts should have their own institutional structure and be clearly located in the respective research organization (at the university/university of applied sciences, faculty, or departmental level). Doctoral candidates are to be regarded by the university and university of applied sciences as early-stage researchers or early-stage artists.¹

The aim is to ensure independent and high-quality scientific or arts-based research by the doctoral candidates, to integrate them into the institutional research activities of the university or university of applied sciences, and to guide them to completion of their degree through the active mentoring/supervision of one supervisor from the university and one supervisor from the university of applied sciences.

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¹ Exceptions apply for doctoral candidates with a degree which officially allows them to pursue a doctoral degree, but which was granted over four years ago because they were for example, working in their field for several years.
1.6.3 Faculty

The lead research institution must name an individual employed 100% in Austria in a scientific or arts-based research capacity as the coordinator of the submitted application. If the application is approved, this individual will be appointed by the research institution to lead the funded project. Since this is a cooperation project between universities according to the Universities Act and universities of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act, the project may be co-headed by two coordinators. The second coordinator is not appointed by the lead research institution, but by (one of) the partner research institutions.

The doctoral program for which funding is requested must involve at least five faculty members (including the coordinator), with 40% of the members from the underrepresented gender. An explanation must be provided if the percentage is lower than 40%. In addition, a description should be provided of the efforts made to increase the proportion of the underrepresented gender. The composition of the team is one of the deciding factors in the review and evaluation process.²

If the project will include faculty members who do not work 100% in Austria, the following guidelines apply: At the time of application by the research institute, the faculty member concerned must prove that they have a true employment contract with the research institution, guaranteed for the planned duration of the project and not financed by the FWF, with a minimum extent of employment of 25%. Applicants 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, substitution arrangements, etc., for advance approval by the FWF.

1.6.4 Research or arts-based research qualifications and supervision or assessment experience

All of the faculty members involved in the proposal must have documented experience over the past five years in supervising/co-supervising doctoral students or assessing dissertations, possess excellent research qualifications and/or meet international standards for arts-based research and demonstrate a connection to the development and exploration of the arts.

The research qualifications of all faculty members involved in the application must be evidenced by means of a publication record over the last five years commensurate with their career stage, which demonstrates their international visibility or, where appropriate, by forms of arts practice over the last five years which have been explicitly informed by research and which have been recognized and evaluated internationally. The following criteria are

² See “Background information target ratio.”
decisive for the assessment of the scientific/scholarly or arts-based research qualifications of each faculty member and in determining whether a review procedure will be initiated:

- **Quality assurance:** Most relevant in assessing the applicant’s publication record are those publications that have been subject to a quality assurance procedure in line with international standards (peer review or an equivalent procedure; in the natural and life sciences, peer review is expected). Journals must usually be listed in Web of Science, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). 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 respective faculty member must provide a link to the publisher’s website, describing the quality assurance procedure applied. If no description should be available, it is the faculty member’s responsibility to provide evidence that the publication has been subject to an appropriate quality assurance procedure.

For faculty members presenting examples of their artistic practice and its critical reception, the work in question must have been publicly accessible. Its quality must be documented in a verifiable manner, making it comparable with research results published in internationally renowned journals. To be accepted as part of the application, the (arts-based) research dimension as well as the underlying research questions must be described individually in a brief statement. This is to be written by the respective faculty member and included in the publication or works list. Where applicable, a list of all lectures and talks (in galleries, theaters, or similar forums) about the artistic work should also be included.

- **International visibility:** Most of the faculty member’s publications/work lists 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 faculty member’s publications/work lists must be commensurate with the discipline and expected career progression. At least two publications must be quality-assured and internationally visible publications with a substantial and independent contribution on the part of the respective faculty member. At least one publication with first, last, or corresponding authorship is required, with the exception of publications in journals and disciplines that rank authors alphabetically. If such publications are cited, the contribution of the respective faculty member must be specified in the attachment: *Statement on researcher’s own publication record.*

If there is any uncertainty about application requirements, the FWF recommends contacting the FWF Office in good time before submitting the application to confirm that all requirements are met. In cases of doubt, the appropriate decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide whether the research qualifications are adequate.

The *Program-specific data* form must include the persistent digital identifier [ORCID](https://orcid.org) (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) of each faculty member.

The experience in supervision/co-supervision of doctoral candidates or experience in assessing dissertations of all faculty members involved in the proposal must be
presented in Attachment 2: Overview of all doctoral students supervised by faculty members and all dissertations assessed in the last five years (Feb. 2018–Feb. 2023).

1.6.5 Consideration of career breaks

The FWF will take justified career breaks (e.g., parental leave, caring for a family member, long-term illness, military or compulsory civil service, or a research position in the non-academic sector) into consideration in assessing the applicant’s eligibility to apply. Relevant information can be included in an individual’s academic CV, making it available to the reviewers.

1.6.6 Inclusion of the disabled and chronically ill

The FWF will also take any atypical career paths due to disability and/or chronic illness into consideration in assessing the applicant’s eligibility to apply. Relevant information can be included in an individual’s academic CV, making it available to the reviewers.

1.6.7 Multiple participation

Researchers can participate in a maximum of two doc.funds.connect applications per call.

Researchers can participate as faculty members in a maximum of two ongoing doc.funds.connect projects. If a researcher is serving as a faculty member in two ongoing projects, they cannot participate in any additional applications.

A researcher may serve as coordinator in no more than one doc.funds.connect project.

The coordinator of a doc.funds.connect project cannot simultaneously act as spokesperson or coordinator in a Special Research Area, Emerging Fields Project, Doctoral Program, or doc.funds project. This applies to both the application and the implementation phases of a project.

As a result, a researcher is not only ineligible to apply for a doc.funds.connect project if they are already serving as the speaker or coordinator in an ongoing doc.funds.connect, doc.funds, Special Research Area, Emerging Fields, or Doctoral Program project, but also if they have already applied to be the speaker or coordinator of a doc.funds, Special Research Area, Emerging Fields, or Doctoral Program project.

The coordinator of an ongoing Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project cannot simultaneously serve as coordinator of a Cluster of Excellence.

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3 Child-raising periods are taken into account (up to three years per child; men must provide proof of having actually cared for the child/children).
If a researcher is designated as a COE’s Director of Research (DOR), that person cannot be named as coordinator in a doc.funds or doc.funds.connect application or serve as coordinator in an ongoing Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project.

Other members of a COE (key researchers, associate researchers, and BOD members who are not the DOR) may be named as coordinator of a doc.funds or doc.funds.connect application or serve as coordinator in an ongoing Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project.

1.7 What types of funding can be requested?

Only 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 participating research institutions’ infrastructure. The FWF does not finance infrastructure or basic equipment at research institutions. Please note that exaggerated cost projections may be grounds for rejection, even if a proposal is otherwise excellent.

Funds may **only** be requested for the **cost categories mentioned below**.

1.7.1 Personnel costs

Funds can be requested to cover personnel costs for a maximum of five doctoral candidates in accordance with the applicable [FWF personnel rates](#). In the application, the research institution must briefly provide reasons for the requested number of doctoral candidate positions and the extent of their employment.

The personnel costs and salaries that can be requested for PROFI (project funding via research institutions) projects, including a fixed percentage increase from the second planning year onwards to compensate for wage increases, can be found on the [FWF website](#).

1.7.2 Costs for education and training

In this category, the maximum amount per doctoral candidate and year amounts to €5,000 and is broken down into consumables, travel costs, and other costs. No additional costs can be requested.

These amounts are intended to cover the costs of academic events specific to the doctoral program (e.g., retreats, thesis committees); costs for study stays abroad; generic skills courses (e.g., project management, English academic writing, etc.); costs for advertising funded doctoral candidate positions; interview invitations, and the costs of conference travel. In addition, the funds may be used to invite visiting researchers or seminar speakers. All
applications must include a brief explanation of how grant funds would be used to cover education costs.

1.7.3 General project costs

For reasons of simplicity, general project costs refer to all those costs that are generally eligible for funding but cannot be requested individually. These include, for example, the costs of additional conference/congress travel, dissemination of scientific/scholarly results, and smaller, unforeseen expenses specific to the project. General project costs are not intended to cover the research institution’s overhead costs.

General project costs should 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.

For up to three years after the completion of the project, researchers can apply for additional funds for publications resulting from projects supported by the FWF as part of its peer-reviewed publications program.

2 Application content and form

2.1 Sections of the application

For an application to be complete, it must contain the following sections 1–5:

1) Academic abstract

Written 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
- Faculty
- Doctoral program
- Added value
2) Project description

- Title sheet: Project title, participating research institution(s) (address and head of institution), and name and institute address (including information on the program coordinator)
- Table of contents
- Project description on no more than 30 consecutively numbered pages, incl. list of abbreviations, headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.; this description should address the following points:
  - Description of research framework (max. 9 pages)
  - Description of faculty (max. 4 pages)
  - Description of education program (max. 9 pages)
  - Organizational structure and contribution of research institution(s) (max. 4 pages)
  - Added value generated by the program (max. 4 pages)

3) Annexes

Please note that annexes are a part of the application and they must be attached to the project description (as part of the file Proposal.pdf) 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 and justification of requested funding
- Annex 3: Academic curriculum vitae (CV) and description of previous research achievements for all faculty members involved in the application (no more than 3 pages per CV)
- Annex 4: (optional): Collaboration letters of national and international cooperation partners (no more than 1 page per letter).

4) Attachments

The following attachments are to be uploaded individually:

Required attachments:

- Attachment 1: Description of the planned dissertation projects on no more than one page and in a structured form addressing hypotheses/aims, approach/methods, time frame, and participating faculty. Please note that the number of described dissertation projects must correspond with the number of doctoral candidate positions requested.

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4 If the description of the dissertation projects is included in the project description (max. 30 pages), Attachment 1 may be omitted. This should be briefly noted in the cover letter to the FWF (see below).

5 If additional doctoral student positions are funded by the research institution(s), the proposed dissertation projects may also be attached.
Attachment 2: Table with an overview of all doctoral candidates supervised or co-supervised and dissertations assessed by the faculty members over the last five years (Feb. 2018–Feb. 2023), listed separately for each faculty member and including the following information:
Name of doctoral student, name of supervisor, dissertation topic, start date, and either graduation date or ongoing

Attachment 3: Publication or works list for the last five years (Feb. 2018–Feb. 2023), broken down into “quality assured publications” and “other publications” (see also section 2.5.3)

Attachments to be uploaded where applicable:

- Accompanying cover letter
  i) In the case of an ongoing FWF-funded Doctoral Program or doc.funds project, or if two or more members of the faculty are involved in an FWF-funded Doctoral Program or doc.funds project
  ii) And/or if Annex 1 has been omitted
- List of reviewers to be excluded (negative list)
- Statement on researcher’s own publication record
- Comment(s) on reviews if resubmitting
- If resubmitting, an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application

5) Completed forms

- Required forms: Academic abstract, Application form, Contact form, Program-specific data form, Cost breakdown form, and Co-authors form
- Optional forms: Other collaborations

2.2 Form requirements

2.2.1 Language of application

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

2.2.2 Formatting

The continuous text in the project description, annexes 1–3, and the attachments must be written in 11 pt. font with 1.5 line (15-20 pt.) spacing and at least 2 cm margins. The document must be created in such a way that it is searchable in PDF format and the formatting can be reviewed.
The structure provided in section 2.3 and all upper limits (e.g., number of pages, attachments, etc.) must be strictly followed, without exception.

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

2.2.3. Submitting the application

All applications must be submitted online using the electronic application portal https://elane.fwf.ac.at.

Before an application can be submitted, the user accounts of both the coordinator as well as the responsible research institute must be activated in the electronic application portal (see Information). All the forms required for the application are then completed online; other documents such as the project description and the attachments are uploaded as separate files.

When preparing the application, researchers must leave enough time to ensure that the research institution has time to approve and submit the application by March 20, 2023 (2:00 pm CET).

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)
   - Dissertation_topics.pdf (Beschreibung der geplanten Dissertationsvorhaben auf max. 1 Seite pro Vorhaben in strukturierter Form, mit PDF-Bookmarks zumindest für die oberste Gliederungsebene)
   - Supervision_list.pdf (overview of all doctoral candidates (co-)supervised and dissertations assessed over the last five years)
   - Publication_list.pdf (publication/works list of all the faculty members for the last five years, broken down into “quality assured publications” and “other publications”)

b) Forms:
   - Academic abstract in English
   - Application form
   - Contact form
   - Program-specific data (to be completed for each faculty member)
Cost breakdown form
- Co-authors
- Other collaborations (if applicable)

2) Optional file uploads:
- Cover_Letter.pdf (= accompanying letter)
- Negative_list.pdf (= list of reviewers who should be excluded)
- Statement_publication_record.pdf (Statement on researcher’s own publication record)
- Overview_revision.pdf (= if resubmitting, an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application)
- Revision.pdf (=if resubmitting, an overall response to all reviewers or, if preferred, a short response to each reviewer saved in a separate file: Revision_A.pdf, Revision_B.pdf etc.)

2.3 Project description

The project description must indicate how the requested budget will be used over a period of up to four years: What topics or research questions defined jointly by the university according to Universities Act and the university of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act will the doctoral candidates work on? How will the planned research efforts fit in with the existing research? To what extent will those efforts serve to strengthen the program’s research basis, make a long-term contribution to the cooperation between the research institutions, and promote the integration of basic research and application-oriented research? The application is to be based on the structured doctoral program, the research conducted in the program, its education and training structure, and the added value of the planned cooperation. All of those elements will be subjected to review and must therefore be described in the application.

The project description (no more than 30 pages) must address the following aspects:

2.3.1 Research framework (max. 9 pages)

The existing doctoral program must be embedded in a focused, consistent research framework on par with the highest international standards. The following aspects must be addressed:

- Description of excellent research according to international standards conducted at the participating research institutions (university according to Universities Act and university of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act) with a (brief!) reference to the state of the art in international research.
▪ Description of the research framework that serves as the basis for the planned doctoral program. This framework must be focused, consistent, and developed jointly by the university according to Universities Act and university of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act.

▪ Description of the research topics/questions to be addressed by the doctoral candidates at both the university according to Universities Act and university of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act. A structured presentation of the planned dissertation projects must be given in Attachment 1 (no more than one page per project).

▪ Explanation of the scientific or arts-based research advances expected to result from the planned project, its innovative potential, and the significance of the resulting research outcomes for the international scientific community.

▪ Presentation of procedures or structures already in place to ensure the quality of research (e.g., internal peer review, mentoring, academic integrity standards, etc.) as well as the involvement of doctoral candidates in the existing research framework.

▪ All potential ethical, safety-related, or regulatory aspects of the planned research project and how researchers plan to address these aspects must be described briefly in a separate section. This aspect should be addressed briefly in the text even if the faculty members believe the project does not raise any ethical issues.

▪ All potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects in the planned research project as well as the planned implementation of these research questions must be described in a separate section. This point should be briefly addressed in the text even if, in the opinion of the faculty members, these aspects do not apply to the project.

2.3.2 Faculty (max. 4 pages)

The proposed doctoral program must be run by a team of at least five scientific or arts-based researchers. All researchers (i.e., faculty members) involved in the proposal must have outstanding academic qualifications that meet or exceed the criteria in section 1.6.4 as well as experience in supervising or co-supervising doctoral candidates or assessing dissertations. The selection criteria for admitting researchers must also be described.

The quality and composition of the faculty should be presented as follows:

▪ Brief description of the academic or arts-based profiles of the faculty members involved in the proposal and their experience in supervising doctoral candidates.

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

7 Positioning and thoughts on the research approaches in the planned for the project in terms of sex-specific and gender-related aspects could include: 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 explanations on reviewing gender relevance, please see here.)
An overview of all doctoral candidates (co-)supervised and/or dissertations assessed by faculty members in the last five years (Feb.2018–Feb.2023) should be provided in Attachment 2.

- Percentage of researchers from the underrepresented gender, which should be at least 40%; If this percentage is not achieved, reasons must be provided and it will be taken into account in the review of the application.
- The selection criteria for the admission of researchers into the doctoral program

2.3.3 Education and training program (max. 9 pages)

In addition to outstanding research, the existing doctoral program is expected to feature a high-quality education and training program based on international standards (see e.g. The Seven Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training, Charter & Code for Researchers | EURAXESS, Salzburg I and II Recommendations), which fulfills the requirements of a structured doctoral program as specified in section 1.6.2. Ideally, the education and training program should be tailored to the research conducted in the doctoral program (i.e., “education through research”).

The structure of the existing education and training program as well as procedures for ensuring the quality of supervision of the doctoral candidates must be described in the proposal. In particular, it must address subsections 2.3.3.1 through 2.3.3.4:

2.3.3.1 Content
- Subject-specific education (content and workload, e.g., number of (required) courses, ECTS credits, etc.)
- Existing opportunities for the acquisition of additional qualifications (transferable skills), for interdisciplinary collaboration, and for the exchange of ideas within the doctoral program (among doctoral candidates, and between candidates and the participating scientific or arts-based researchers at the university and the university of applied sciences, e.g., journal clubs, retreats, PhD seminars, lab rotations, etc.) and with the business world, public administration, the arts, culture, NGOs, etc.

2.3.3.2 Selection of doctoral candidates
- Positions advertised internationally, transparent application and selection procedures
- Process of matching doctoral candidates to supervisors

2.3.3.3 Supervision (including monitoring) of doctoral candidates and their integration into the research framework
- Rules on supervision, mentoring, and assessment (dissertation agreements, regular progress reports, team supervision instead of exclusively individual supervision, etc.) as well as conflict resolution mechanisms
- Support for international networking and promotion of mobility, including opportunities for research stays abroad (over several months), budget allocations for conference attendance, lab visits, invitations to visiting researchers, organisation of PhD conferences, etc.

- Working conditions (including infrastructure) for doctoral candidates: Description of employment contracts (duration, extent of employment, any options for extension) and funding models for doctoral candidates, available infrastructure, and any special equipment or facilities at the research institution

2.3.3.4 Criteria and assessment procedures to ensure a top-notch international doctoral degree

- Requirements for completion (both formal and content-related)
- Assessment procedures (with involvement of external researchers; supervision and evaluation performed by different people, if compliant with study-law regulations)

2.3.4 Organizational structure and contribution of research institutions (max. 4 pages)

The participating research institutions (university according to the Universities Act and the university of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act) must commit to providing all the necessary infrastructure (equipment, workstations, workspace, supplies, etc.) for at least the 4-year funding period and ensure that the doctoral program is integrated into the research institution’s regular activities. These contributions on the part of the research institutions are an integral part of the proposed project.

The following information must be provided:

- Institutional organization and structures as well as integration of the doctoral program into the research institutions: Organizational structure and responsibilities (co-heads are possible), faculty members’ rights and obligations to participation, decision-making structures and bodies (equal representation), quality assurance and internal control, incorporation into the research organization, integration in the teaching system of the university and university of applied sciences

- Facilities and equipment already available (rooms/space, equipment, supplies, etc.) at the participating research institution(s), and infrastructure for doctoral candidates

- Contribution of the research institutions, for instance, providing rooms and workstations, supplies, infrastructure, funding for visiting professors if applicable, training opportunities for supervisors, etc.

It is recommended to define the provisions regulating the division of responsibilities, the decision-making process, and the handling of financial, personnel, and organizational aspects in the statutes. The statutes are to be regarded as a contractual agreement between
all the faculty members and the coordinator and, if the project is approved, can be included as a part of the agreement with the FWF.

2.3.5 Added value (max. 4 pages)

The proposed doctoral program must differ from general doctoral education and training programs in the relevant discipline and be more than just a consolidation of scientific or arts-based researchers at universities according to the Universities Act and universities of applied sciences according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act.

The application must address the following:
- The unique selling points of the proposed doctoral program (in terms of research and education) and differences from general doctoral education
- The specific added value for doctoral candidates, the faculty, and the participating research institutions
- The added value for science arising from the combination of basic research and applied research
- The contribution to strengthening the program's research basis at the participating research institutions and to strengthening research transfer activities
- The contribution towards strengthening the cooperation between universities of applied sciences and universities in general
- The contribution towards promoting the personnel development of research staff at universities of applied sciences
- Measures for ensuring a long-term relationship between the participating research institutions during and after the funding period

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 (References) on no more than 5 pages

2.4.2 Annex 2: Information on and justification for requested funding

A description of financial aspects using the following structure is to be appended to the project description as Annex 2. The costs must be broken down and adequately justified for
each point below. The list and justification for the requested funding must correspond with the costs indicated in the Cost breakdown form.

- Information on the funding requested
  - Concise justifications for the number of doctoral positions applied for (with reference to the planned dissertation projects where applicable) and a description of the research institutions where they will be employed. Please note that doctoral candidates should preferably be employed at the research institution with the best conditions for the success of the dissertation based on the subject of the research project. However, it must also be ensured that there is a balanced ratio of employment between the university and the university of applied sciences.
  - Concise justifications for and planned use of requested funding for education and training

2.4.3 Annex 3: CVs and description of previous research achievements

The academic CVs and previous research achievements (publication/works list) must be attached for all faculty members and may not exceed 3 pages per faculty member.

2.4.3.1 Required contents for academic CVs

- Name and contact details, address of the research institution, and relevant websites. It is also required to provide a publicly accessible link (hyperlink) to a list of all published publications/works of art; 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 research areas and brief description of the most important research achievements to date

2.4.3.2 Required description of previous research achievements

- Publications/work lists: List of no more than ten of the most important published or accepted scientific/scholarly or arts-based research publications (journal articles, monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, preprints, proceedings, etc.) or work lists; for each publication, 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. For faculty members presenting examples of their artistic practice and its critical reception, the work in question must have been publicly accessible.
- Additional research achievements: List of no more than ten of the most important scientific/scholarly or arts-based research achievements other than academic
publications or works lists, such as awards, conference papers, keynote speeches, important research projects (e.g., projects approved by peer review such as CD Labor, EU H2020 projects, COMET projects, etc.), research data, software, codes, preprints, exhibitions, knowledge transfer activities, science communication, licenses, or patents

2.4.4 Annex 4: Collaboration letters

If applicable, collaboration letters (no more than 1 page each) issued by national and international cooperation partners can be attached to the application, if they have been named in the project description as essential for the implementation of the project.

2.5 Required attachments (uploaded separately)

2.5.1 Attachment 1: Planned dissertation projects

With regard to the research framework (section 2.3.1), a description of the planned dissertation projects must be attached to the application as Attachment 1. The description should be no longer than one page per project, be written in structured form, and address the hypotheses/aims, approaches/methods, time frame, and the participating faculty members. Please keep in mind that the number of the described dissertation projects must correspond with the number of doctoral candidate positions requested. Please note that the project description must also include a description of the theoretical framework and the incorporation of the dissertation project into the research program.

2.5.2 Attachment 2: List of doctoral candidates supervised over the last five years

The application must also include an attached overview of all doctoral candidates supervised and dissertations assessed by the faculty members over the last five years (Feb. 2018–Feb. 2023), listed separately for each faculty member and including the following information: Name of doctoral student, name of supervisor, dissertation topic, start date, and either graduation date or ongoing.

2.5.3 Attachment 3: Publication or works list for the last five years

A list of all published publications or works from the last five years (Feb. 2018–Feb. 2023, broken down into “quality assured” and “other publications”) for all faculty members whose CV are included in the application. The lists should be merged into one PDF document.

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8 If the description of the dissertation projects is included in the 30-page project description, Attachment 1 may be omitted. This must be briefly noted in the cover letter to the FWF.

9 If additional doctoral student positions are funded by the research institution(s), the proposed dissertation projects may also be attached.

10 Publication lists must include: all authors, complete titles, journal, year, and page numbers. Either a DOI address or another persistent identifier should be indicated for each publication; for publications with more than 20 authors, an "et al." citation can be used.
entitled *Publication_list.pdf*. This list, which will not be forwarded to reviewers, is used to assess faculty members’ eligibility and helps the FWF to speed up the process of finding reviewers who do not have a conflict of interest.

### 2.6 Forms

All required forms must be completed online.

- *Academic abstract*
- *Application form*
- *Contact form*
- *Program-specific data*
- *Cost breakdown form*
- *Co-authors form*: All persons who have made substantial research-related or arts-based research 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.

In order for the application to be legally binding, the FWF requires the fully completed forms and the “Affirmation of the research institution,” provided when the application is approved and submitted.

### 2.7 Additional attachments

In addition to the project description and the required forms, the following attachments should be uploaded, where applicable:

- Accompanying cover letter:
  - In the case of an ongoing FWF-funded Doctoral Program project or doc.funds. project or if two or more faculty members of the proposed doctoral program are involved in a Doctoral Program or doc.funds. project, the application needs to provide a clear and easily understandable explanation of the differences between this proposal and the ongoing FWF-funded projects.
  - If the description of the dissertation projects is included in the project description (max. 30 pages) and Attachment 1 has been omitted, this must be mentioned in the cover letter.
- List of reviewers to be excluded
- Statement on researcher’s own publication record
- Attachments when revising a rejected application (resubmission); see [section 2.8](#).
Please note that any annexes or attachments other than the ones named above (such as letters of recommendation, publications not yet published) will be disregarded in further stages of the process.

### 2.8 Revising a rejected application (resubmission)

A resubmission is defined as the revision of an application which the FWF has rejected with the same or similar research or arts-based research questions, regardless of the program category. If an application is submitted on the same or a very similar research or arts-based research question and if, in the view of the faculty members, this application is not a resubmission but a completely new project, this must be explained in a separate accompanying letter to the FWF Office. For example, changes in research methods alone are not sufficient for a proposal to qualify as a completely new project. In cases of doubt, the decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide.

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

- An accompanying letter containing an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application must be provided (*Overview_Revision.pdf*); this overview will not be passed on to the reviewers.

- Response(s) to reviews must be provided: Faculty members can decide whether the response(s) should be passed on only to the individual 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 describe the corresponding changes made. No response is required to reviews written by individuals 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, a document containing an overall response must be submitted.

If these responses are to be passed on only to the individual reviewers who were previously involved, a short response to each review in a separate document should be included.

Resubmissions must show changes. In the case of resubmissions of applications that have been rejected for the standardized reasons C3, C4, and C5, the changes need to be substantial (based on the comments in the reviews). If no such changes are made, the FWF’s decision-making bodies will return the application without review.

There is no deadline for the resubmission of a rejected application, but any relevant application requirements must be considered. The procedure described in section 2.2.3 applies to all resubmissions, i.e. they are submitted as new, independent application and not as a supplementary application to the previously rejected one.
3 Processing and decision on the application

All applications approved and submitted by the research institutions by March 20, 2023 (2:00 pm CET) will be subjected to a formal check by the FWF Office.

The review process takes about ten months. The FWF Board decides on the awarding of funds once per year (late November 2023) on the basis of at least three international reviews. If the number of submissions exceeds 15 applications, a meeting of the international doc.funds.connect jury will be held in addition to the written reviews (probably in early November 2023). Approximately one month before this meeting, the FWF Board will draw up a shortlist of promising applications on the basis of at least three substantive reviews; those candidates will then be invited to hearings. These hearings will be held on the first two days of the international doc.funds.connect jury meeting. After the hearings, the international jury will hold a closed session to prepare its recommendations. The jury’s recommendations are based on the written reviews and the hearings.

Each research institution will be informed in writing of the decision. Research institutions whose applications are not selected for a hearing will receive a decision letter along with the reviews received (in anonymous form) prior to the meeting of the international jury.

Selected representatives of the Christian Doppler Research Association (CDG) will be involved in the entire decision-making process in an advisory capacity.

Requests for changes and returning applications without review

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 of the application) will be returned. If the problems identified by the FWF in an application are not rectified within a reasonable period of time (no more than ten working days after notification), the decision-making bodies of the FWF will return these proposals without review. Similarly, applications will not be reviewed if they have been previously rejected by the FWF and resubmitted without appropriate revisions.

All applications that conform with the FWF’s regulations will be sent out for review. The reviewers (generally individuals working outside of Austria) will be selected by the members of the FWF Board and the CDG Senate and confirmed by the FWF’s decision-making bodies. Once the review process has begun, no more changes can be made to the application.

Grounds for rejection

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

12 A detailed description of the decision-making process, the criteria for selecting international reviewers, detailed rules concerning conflicts of interest, and the composition of juries and boards can be found in the General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure.
The grounds for rejecting an application are classified into five categories (C1–C5) and will be sent to applicants along with the reviews.

*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 (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.

In principle, only topics are barred, not researchers or applying research institutions.

*Excluding reviewers*

A separate document can be included with the application, providing 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 policy on conflicts of interest can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

This list may include up to three potential reviewers the faculty members believe 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 fulfill 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 research institutions applying for funding must comply with all legal requirements and safety provisions (e.g., Federal Disabilities Act) that apply for their doc.funds.connect 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 Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI) also apply.

Where a breach of these standards is suspected, the ombud of the respective research institution is responsible for investigating the issue. Research institutions are required to report any cases of suspected serious violations of the standards to the ÖAWI. The FWF reserves the right to suspend, in part or in whole, any procedures related to applications or ongoing projects until this investigation has been concluded. More detailed information can be found on the FWF website and in the document FWF procedure in cases of suspected violation of the standards of good research practice.

5 Publication of project data and results

Please note that should the project be approved, the FWF will publish brief summaries of the project in German and English for public relations purposes on its website. These PR summaries must be sent to the FWF upon return of the grant agreement. The FWF will also publish the amount of funding granted and, after completion of the project, summaries of the final project report. The researchers should ensure that the content of these summaries is written in such a way as to safeguard the legitimate interests of secrecy for reasons of national defense and patent law and to guarantee 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 plan should also be sent to the FWF upon return of the grant agreement. The template for the DMP can be viewed and downloaded here.

Both in presentations and in the publication of project results (e.g., scientific publications, research data, congress and media contributions), the relevant requirements for naming the FWF as the funding institution and the Open Access Policy apply.
Appendix: Notes and questions for reviewers in the doc.funds.connect program\textsuperscript{13}

The FWF actively supports equal opportunities and equal treatment in all of its programs. The review of an application must not put applicants at a disadvantage for non-research-related reasons such as age, gender, etc. For example, instead of considering the applicant’s actual age, the review process should focus on the how the length of the individual's research career corresponds to their research achievements to date.

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

Only the ten most important academic or arts-based research publications/work and the ten most important additional research achievements of the faculty member are to be considered when evaluating the application. As a signatory to the \underline{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\textsuperscript{14} using the following seven assessment criteria: 1) research quality, 2) quality and composition of the faculty, 3) quality of the doctoral program, 4) contribution of the research institutions, 5) added value, 6) ethics and gender, and 7) overall evaluation. For each of these criteria except 6) we ask you for both written comments and a rating on a scale from “outstanding” to “poor.” Please be aware, however, that the FWF’s funding decision will be based primarily on reviewers’ written assessments rather than the ratings assigned.

Please keep in mind that sections 1 and 2 will be forwarded to the researchers in an anonymized form.

\textsuperscript{13} Further information can be found on our website: FWF Policy and Mission Statement or in these application guidelines.

\textsuperscript{14} Form requirements: Project description incl. figures and tables, no more than 30 pages; list of literature cited no more than 5 pages; academic CVs and description of previous research achievements of the faculty members incl. the ten most important publications, no more than 3 pages each.
Section 1: Remarks for the research team

1) Research quality
How would you rate the quality of the faculty’s research achievements to date? Is the planned research project, including the planned dissertation projects, innovative and timely? How do you assess the international visibility and competitiveness of the planned research? Is the planned research project well thought out, focused in terms of content, and coherent?

2) Quality and composition of the faculty
How well qualified are the researchers involved to carry out the proposed research? How would you rate the academic qualifications and training/supervision experience of the faculty members? How do you assess the reputation and international networking of the faculty? Is the gender ratio in the faculty appropriate? How would you rate the level of diversity in the faculty (e.g. complementary competences at participating universities and universities of applied sciences in the field of basic research and application-oriented research, percentage of junior researchers)?

In evaluating their qualifications, please consider their career stage, taking into account unorthodox career paths and circumstances that may have slowed down their progress (e.g., parental leave, long-term or chronic illness, disability, caregiving responsibilities).

3) Quality of the doctoral program
How would you rate the quality of the education/training and supervision program in terms of:

▪ Academic or arts-based research curriculum, including the integration of application-oriented aspects/elements, opportunities to acquire additional qualifications
▪ Selection procedure, supervision structures, procedures for assessing dissertations, gender-sensitive program design, mentoring
▪ Institutional integration and structures

4) Contribution of research institutions
Is the contribution of the research institution(s) (infrastructure and financial contribution) adequate and reasonable?

5) Added value
Does the project provide added value in the following areas:
▪ Research
▪ Education/training
▪ PhD students and participating research institutions (i.e. university and university of applied sciences)
▪ Strengthening the existing research basis at universities and universities of applied sciences
▪ Strengthening the cooperation between universities of applied sciences and universities, taking into account the aspect of personnel development of research staff at universities of applied sciences
▪ The sustainable integration of basic research and applied research and the strengthening of research transfer

Do you expect synergy effects to result from this cooperation, as compared to independent efforts?

6) Ethics and gender aspects

*Ethics:* Have ethical considerations been addressed satisfactorily?

*Gender:* Applicants are required to address any relevant sex-specific and/or gender-related elements inherent in research questions and/or research design. Please assess whether these aspects have been adequately addressed.

7) 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.

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**Section 2: Optional recommendations to the research team**

If you are in favor of the project being funded, you may want to add to the formal assessment in Section 1 by making further and perhaps more informal comments or suggestions here. Please note, however, that these comments may also have an impact on the FWF's funding decision, especially if they amount to criticism of the project's contents.

**Section 3: Confidential remarks to FWF**

Please use this field to make comments that you do not want submitted to the research team. Feel free to also give us feedback about the evaluation process and your interactions with us.