START-Program: Differences from the General Principles of Decision-making Procedures

Introductory remarks:

All decisions relating to the START Program are taken by the FWF Board on recommendations of an international jury. Decisions are based on written reviews (exclusively from international experts) and, in some cases, a hearing.

Submission of applications:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

However, applications within the START Program may be submitted only by the deadline for applications, which is announced annually, and in accordance with the current “Guidelines for START applications” to the FWF. Only errors and problems communicated by the FWF can be corrected within no more than 10 working days after receipt of an official notification of the FWF. If the applicant fails to do so, the FWF’s Executive Board will reject the applications without subjecting them to review.

Each application will be assigned to a Reporter and an Alternate and in addition to a member of the international jury, who will be primarily responsible for the application. In the case of inter- or multidisciplinary applications, more than one jury member may be involved.

The FWF’s guidelines described in the general principles of the decision-making procedure for handling conflicts of interest apply equally to the members of the international jury.

Initiation of international review:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

The initiation of the review process is decided by the responsible bodies of the FWF, which appoints the reviewers based on the proposals of the referees and/or alternates an or jury members; this process takes place after receipt of the applications.

START applications may be rejected without review for formal reasons or for reasons of quality. Such decisions are taken by the FWF Board and, if necessary, in consultation with the international jury.
Minimum number of reviews:

For a positive decision on a particular application a minimum of 3 reviews are required. If it is clear from the reviews that the decision will be negative, a decision may be based on fewer reviews. If an application impinges on several scientific disciplines the number of reviews required may be increased.

Funding decisions:

Decisions on the award of START Grants are taken by the FWF-Board 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 international jury prepares a shortlist of promising START candidates before the meeting (generally three to four weeks in advance). These candidates are invited to a hearing 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 hosting research institution will also be informed of the decision.

The international jury reaches its list of recommendation for new START-projects in a closed session, i.e. in the absence of the FWF Board.

After the results are announced (generally within a week of the jury meeting), the decisions are formally prepared by the FWF Office and communicated to the shortlisted applicants together with the corresponding reviews, in anonymous form. The hosting research institution will also be informed of the decision.

The FWF Office supports the reporters and the jury in their work and is the direct point of contact for applicants in all matters relating to the program.

Resubmissions:

Unsuccessful applications may be revised and resubmitted, provided that there is no proposal ban. In the case of a resubmission it is the general practice to contact some of the reviewers of the rejected version as well as new reviewers. It is thus important to draw attention to any changes made in response to explicit suggestions from the reviewers.

Review of the interim reports:

Following three years of a START project an interim report is prepared according to the relevant guidelines. This is subjected to international review (generally by the reviewers of the initial application). At least two written reviews are required. Based on the reviews, the FWF Board decides whether to extend the project and release the money reserved for the second funding period – in some cases after discussions with the international jury.