

Guide for Writing a Full Proposal

Cognitive Sciences Call 2018

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Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF)
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<http://www.wwtf.at>

About WWTF

The Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF) is the only larger Austrian private non-profit organization established to promote science and research. WWTF started its funding activities in 2003. According to its statutes, WWTF aims to fund excellent scientific research(ers) following the highest international standards in order to promote Vienna as a city of science and research.

WWTF provides substantial funding for larger multi-annual research projects at home institutions located in Vienna (“Project Funding”), as well as striving to attract excellent researchers from abroad to Vienna (“Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators”). WWTF runs calls resulting in a strong competition for funding.

Currently, WWTF runs the following thematic programmes: “Life Sciences” (*2003), “Mathematics and ...” (*2004), “Information and Communication Technology” (*2008), and “Cognitive Sciences” (*2011). The financial resources of WWTF originate from the “*Privatstiftung zur Verwaltung von Anteilsrechten*” and from the City of Vienna.

While the thematic funding programmes are established in close coordination with Viennese RTD policy and initiatives, the review and selection process lies strictly in the hands of international scientists not employed in Austria. For each call, an appropriate international expert jury is formed. Additionally, for each application entering the full proposal stage a number of written peer reviews are obtained.

Important Issues

The **Call Fiche** including contact information of WWTF call managers is available at www.wwtf.at. The formal criteria for a WWTF CS 2018 project include a minimum funding volume of € 200,000 with an upper range of up to € 600,000 and a planned duration of 2-4 years. In total, € 3 million are dedicated to this call.

The **Principal Investigator (PI)** of a WWTF project must have a Viennese home institution to which the project is affiliated. This includes researchers moving to Vienna with a Viennese affiliation and work place in case of funding. Project **partners** outside of Vienna may receive funding of up to 20% of the total funding applied for. Partners outside Vienna are an option; they are neither obligatory nor a formal criterion for acceptance.

For **universities**, WWTF projects are treated according to §27 of the 2002 University Act. Therefore, authorized signatures from the university / scientific institution acting as home institution are mandatory for submission. In case of funding, the PI's home institution will be the formal contract partner for WWTF with the principal investigator taking full scientific and financial responsibility.

WWTF funding may be used for all project-related costs; however, the main focus should be on funding scientific personnel. Everybody employed in a WWTF-funded project should get a fair contract with at least a *minimum wage* according to the "Kollektivvertrag" (collective agreement) of the Austrian Universities or – for staff employed at non-university institutions – according to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) available online at www.fwf.ac.at/de/forschungsfoerderung/personalkostensaetze. A maximum total employment is set to 100%. When planning the budget, please use full-time equivalent (FTE) salaries and be aware that the PhD salary listed by FWF is for a 75% position.

No personnel costs can be claimed for permanent senior staff that is fully financed by the institution. Exceptions are made for institutions whose basic institutional block funding is less than 40% of the overall budget of the organisation. In these cases, permanently employed senior staff can claim up to 20% of their annual salary from WWTF.

The personnel categories are:

- **Senior Personnel:** highly qualified scientists, usually already in permanent employment
- **Post Doc:** or equivalent qualification, including Senior Postdocs
- **PhD Student:** or equivalent qualification
- **Diploma Student:** Bachelor or Master students
- **Office/Technician:** office staff or technical staff (proportional funding only)

The funding by WWTF under this scheme is not intended to cover investment in general infrastructure, however pro rata depreciation rates for the project duration are fundable for **equipment** necessary for the project. WWTF funding also covers **materials** (consumables and small devices up to €1,500 each), **travelling costs** (incurred for attending project related scientific events and invitations), **publication costs** (including costs for patent filing and open access publication), **workshops / conferences** (costs incurred for own scientific events), and **other project related costs**. However, non-personnel costs must be balanced and should not exceed 30% of the funding volume applied for.

WWTF pays a **maximum of 20% overhead**. Overhead (“indirect costs”) is calculated as 20% of the direct costs of the project. The total funding volume is calculated as direct + indirect costs. In case of funding a separate project account / SAP number for bookkeeping is necessary for each project and the direct costs must be reported to WWTF. The overhead is paid as a flat rate with no conditions attached. Kindly comply with the overhead regulations of the involved institutions.

Compliance with the **rules for good scientific practice including the appreciation of ethical aspects in research** is mandatory even at the proposal stage.

- If approval from the ethics committee/institutional review board is required for the planned project this has to be clearly stated at the short proposal stage and the approval (“Votum”) **has to be submitted online with the full proposal to WWTF (PDF upload in the section “Research Project”)**.
- The approval by the ethics committee has to be specific for the planned WWTF project; therefore the title of the project should be the same as on the approval (minor deviations are possible). If the title of the approved research differs significantly from the planned WWTF project, the PI has to include a statement (in the online submission system) confirming that the approval covers the planned research.
- If the main applicant for the ethical approval is not the PI or co-PI/Core-Team Member of the WWTF proposal, a clear statement has to be included in the online proposal whereby the PI or co-PI/Core-Team Member confirms that he/she is authorized to conduct the planned research within this ethical approval.
- If the planned research is covered by an existing approval, the applicants have to submit the extension of the approval (“Verlängerung der Gültigkeit des Votums”). The above also applies for extensions.
- Should it be impossible to have a final approval before the full proposal deadline due to reasons which are beyond the control of the applicant, such as constraints imposed by the local ethics committee, the applicant **must explain the reasons in the provided textbox** in the submission system and send the preliminary approval **at the latest by the 15th of November 2018 to the call manager**.

Non-compliance will result a rejection of the proposal on formal grounds and will therefore not be further processed or sent for evaluation.

Please also consider WWTF’s open access policy available at www.wwtf.at.

Funding Criteria

This WWTF call aims to support interdisciplinary teams that address innovative research questions in the field of Cognitive Sciences in order to advance the understanding of cognition and behaviour in humans, animals and/or artificial cognitive systems.

The key selection criterion for this call is **scientific quality**, i.e., both the applicant and the submitted proposal must be scientifically outstanding. The **innovative aspects** of a project are also major criteria in the review of the proposals.

WWTF provides funding for scientific re-search projects which:

- Bring together two to three different scientific disciplines to address innovative re-search questions in the field of Cognitive Sciences (incl. Neurosciences),
- include empirical data (i.e. purely theoretical approaches will be excluded),
- improve the understanding of current substantial research questions in the Cognitive Sciences and demonstrate how the proposed work advances the Cognitive Sciences as a field,
- are characterized by a well-defined scientific research plan that includes clearly identified research questions and hypotheses, and a catalogue of sound methods to address the research questions,
- have a proposing team of researchers demonstrating a solid scientific track record according to the academic age and reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the call.

Projects may come from all fields and subdomains of the Cognitive Sciences. Partners may come from areas and disciplines outside the Cognitive Sciences.

Evaluation Process

In this call a **two-stage submission process** is used: in the first stage, a short proposal (character limits incl. spaces are defined in the online submission system) were submitted describing the key objectives and motivation for the proposed work. Second, the applicants of successful short proposals are invited to submit a full proposal.

Full proposals will have to be submitted by **August 9, 2018 at 2pm**.

Evaluation procedure in detail:

1. Formal eligibility check by WWTF: the proposals will be screened for formal eligibility by the WWTF office based on the following criteria: Principal Investigator is affiliated to a Viennese research institution | duly submitted | funding range between € 200,000 and € 600,000 | required signatures | all required parts filled out | length of the proposal not exceeded | not more than two key roles in different proposals. **Proposals that do not meet the key requirements outlined will not be sent for further evaluation to the jury or reviewers.** Applicants of proposals which are deemed ineligible will be informed shortly after the submission deadline.

2. Evaluation of full proposals: The full proposal must be consistent and in accordance with the successful short proposal, extending it by providing full details about the approach, the specific work plan etc. Full proposals should not exceed the size limits indicated in the submission system. The evaluation of full proposals is carried out through a combination of written international peer review and a jury of international experts that convene in Vienna. At least **two jury members** are assigned to each proposal which at first undergoes **written peer review** by at least three international reviewers.

3. Jury meeting in Vienna in December 2018: This is the most significant step in the assessment. There will be a comprehensive evaluation of all proposals on basis of written peer reviews and the jury's own expertise resulting in a recommendation "to be funded" or "not to be funded" for each proposal.

4. Formal funding decision (confirmation of jury recommendation) by WWTF Boards in December 2018.

Applicants that have submitted a full proposal will receive anonymized full text reviews and a summary of the jury discussion after the formal funding decision.

How to use WWTF's Online Submission System

1. Go to <https://funding.wwtf.at>
2. **Log in**, choose the call, and select your proposal.
3. **Full proposal**: Fill in requested information in *online forms* and *upload requested files* (in PDF format). You can save the current status of your proposal at any time and access the system multiple times and edit the provided information!
4. **Submit proposal**: The submit button becomes active only after all requested information has been filled in and uploaded (signaled by a green check mark next to the chapter title); Please be aware that after submission no changes are possible anymore!

Note: The submission system closes at 2 pm on the day of the deadline. The upload limit of the "Research Project" and additional PDF uploads is 8MB (excluding the ethical approval(s)).

Required Structure of a WWTF Full Proposal

Applications to WWTF undergo an assessment by international scientists, thus all proposals must be written in **English**, except the "General Description" in German. Please write precisely and to the point but include sufficient detail to allow an evaluation by international peers.

The information for the full proposal consists of a part that is written "offline" and has to be uploaded as one PDF document as well as information that has to be filled in directly in the online submission system.

Offline / word processing part of the proposal:

- Some parts of the full proposal must be written offline with a word processing programme to allow images, tables, etc. and then uploaded (as a PDF file) to the WWTF submission system. A template is provided for this part of the proposal, which you can find in section 2. Research Project in the submission system.
- You may use the word-processing software of your choice but we kindly ask you to use a **common font type such as Arial and a font size of 11pt. Line spacing should be between 1.3 and 1.5.** If these style recommendations are drastically changed, thereby causing legibility issues, this might be cause for formal rejection of the proposal.
- Please **do not add any headers or footers** (such as page numbers, proposal number, title of proposal) to the file since this information will be added automatically upon upload of the PDF.

- You **may include figures, tables**, etc. to improve the scientific presentation. Please note that the **size limit for the overall proposal is 8 MB**, therefore, bear in mind the appropriate resolution/file size of the figures.
- The length of the offline part of the **full proposal may not exceed 15 pages**. Please note that the system blocks the upload if this page count is exceeded.
- Bear in mind that the **full proposal is an extension of the short proposal** you have already submitted. Thus, substantial changes of in the project may impact the evaluation of the project by the jury.

Online part of the proposal:

- The title of the research project, keywords and the key applicants (PI, Co-PI, and core team members) must be identical to those on the short proposal. No substitution, deletions or additions of key applicants are allowed.
- All character limits include spaces.

1. Project Summary (online)

- **Basic information** of the project such as the title is already filled-out. Information is transferred from the short proposal. The project duration can be changed, however major deviations from the short proposal must be thoroughly justified.
- **Scientific abstract** (up to 1,500 characters including spaces) in English will be the first information jury members and peer reviewers read.
- **General description** (up to 1,500 characters including spaces) in **German** is mandatory and will be used by WWTF for public relations work (such as the WWTF webpage) in case of funding, but will not be visible in the final electronic proposal and print-out (for the panel and peer reviewers). We ask you to write a simplified summary and not simply translate the scientific abstract into German.
- **Suggested peers** (for peer review): Applicants must suggest five international peers from fields of competences who are able to review the proposal. Suggested reviewers who you have previously worked with (publication activity, research cooperation, etc.) will not be considered due potential conflicts of interest. Please provide up to five keywords or phrases that describe the reviewers' fields of competence to allow for a balanced set of reviewers to be chosen.
- **Excluded peers** (for peer review) (optional, max. 3): Applicants may, without stating any reasons, exclude up to three peers (i.e. individual researchers and not institutions) from reviewing your proposal. The names will be stored in the WWTF database and will not be visible in the electronic proposal or print-out. Please note that we will review internationally only, thus, no reviewer with an Austrian affiliation or with very close links to Austrian research will receive the proposal.

2. Research Project (max. 15 pages including figures, PDF upload) (a template is provided in the submission system)

Page numbers are indications about the expected length of each part, however, we allow for some flexibility between subchapters if this allows for a more precise presentation of the project. However, please note that the omission of individual parts may result in a negative evaluation.

- I. Project description** (about 4 pages)
 - a. Subject of the research
 - b. State of the art and key scientific challenges
 - c. Research questions and hypotheses

- II. Objectives and expected outcomes** (about 1 page)
 - a. Objectives of the project
 - b. Expected results and outcomes

- III. Innovativeness and relevance** (about 2 pages)
 - a. Contribution and relevance of the work to the cognitive sciences
 - b. Innovative aspects of the proposal
 - c. Interdisciplinarity

- IV. Methodological approach** (about 5 pages)
 - a. Methodology
 - b. Research plan (including Gantt chart)
 - c. Feasibility and risk management

- V. Roles of personnel** (about 1,5 page)
 - a. Roles and competences of key researchers
 - b. Project management
 - c. Research environment

- VI. Key references** (about 1,5 pages)

Online form

Upload “Research Project”


Potential ethical aspects (max. 750 characters)

Confirmation if an **approval of an ethics committee / institutional review board** is required or not. **If yes, upload the ethical approval(s) as a single PDF.** There is no page limit, but the document may not exceed 5MB. This PDF is only for internal use and will not be sent to the panel or the peer reviewers. Also see p.4 on ethical aspects in this guide.

3. Project Team

Persons and their roles filled into the system for the short proposals (PI, Co-PI, core team members) cannot be changed or deleted. The roles and responsibilities of these persons as well as their specific competencies for the proposed project can be described in detail (max. 500 characters per textbox). The CV uploaded in the short proposal stage can be replaced; however the use of the WWTF CV Template is mandatory also at this stage. The template can be downloaded in this section of the proposal in the submission system.

Further persons not in a “key role” (all but PI, Co-PI, core team members) can be added. This is relevant to calculate the project budget. Placeholders for future team members can be added by selecting “N.N.” from the *Title* drop-down and allocated a budget in the next section, multiple N.N.s should be numbered in the surname box.

Additional person 1 

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Title: * | First/given name(s): * | Last name/surname: * |
| | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| | Year of birth: * | Highest academic title: | Date of doctorate: (dd.mm.yyyy) |
| | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Institution: * | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Staff category * | <input type="text" value="-- please select --"/> | | |

 add Additional person

Staff categories: “Senior personnel”, “Post-Doc”, “PhD student”, “Diploma student”, “Office, technician”

To add an additional person from a different institution other than the institutions of the three persons from the core team, you first have to add an additional partner institution.

In total, a maximum of 5 institutions can be entered.

Partner Institution(s)

Partner Institution 1 

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Contact person: | Title: * | Academic title: * | First/given name(s): * | Last name/surname: * |
| | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Partner institution: * | <input type="text"/> | | | |
| Institute/department /group: * | <input type="text"/> | | | |
| Address: * | <input type="text"/> | | | |
| Zip code/city /country: * | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| E-mail: * | <input type="text"/> | | | |
| Telephone: * | <input type="text"/> | | | |
| Website: * | <input type="text"/> | | | |

 [add Partner Institution](#)

- **Gender Management Policy** (up to 750 characters including spaces): Please describe how your project manages gender equality issues for example in job announcements, recruitment of staff and working environment.
- **Plans for Human Resources Development** (up to 750 characters including spaces): Please describe how your project contributes to human resources development of the team members (e.g., providing opportunities for research, staff exchange, teaching and mentoring).

Project Budget

- **Planning of personnel costs (Table 1)** includes the names and staff category of all persons listed in part “3. Project Team” which are automatically filled in. First choose the funding source (WWTF, in-kind, WWTF & in-kind) and then add the average yearly time commitment for each project year. The average yearly time commitment for the funding source category “in-kind” is set to a minimum of 5%. Finally, for those persons where WWTF funding is requested, fill in the salary corresponding to a **100% employment¹** (full time equivalent) in the respective column. The total funding applied for each person will then automatically be calculated including a 3% annual salary increase. At the end of Table 1 you will see the total personnel costs applied for from WWTF. Costs are calculated in **thousands of Euro**, e.g. 305.60 k Euro = 305,600 Euro.
- **Planning of non-personnel costs (Table 2)**, project related costs for equipment, consumables, travelling, publications, organization of workshops/ conferences/ ..., and other costs) has to include a concise description of costs per cost category/ insti-

¹ Please be aware that the PhD salary listed by the FWF is for a 75% or a 30 hours position.

tution as well as the funding applied for. The budget for non-personnel costs is limited to max. 30% of overall WWTF funding.

- **Total funding applied for per institution (Table 3)** details the direct costs that will be automatically filled in using the information provided in tables 1 and 2. Kindly add the overhead percentage (i.e., indirect costs) per involved institution as an integer between 0 (no overheads claimed) and 20 (20% overheads claimed). Finally, Table 3 will give you an overview on the total funding applied for from WWTF per involved institution. Up to 20% of the budget may be allocated to institutions outside of Vienna. Note: Minimum funding volume is 200,000 €, the upper limit is 600,000 €. *There should not be any significant changes in the requested volume in comparison to the short proposal. Exceptions are accepted but require an explanation in the section “Explanation of Cost Planning”.*
- You are also asked to tick a checkbox that you are aware of the **overhead policy** of your institution.
- **Explanation of Cost Planning** (max. 3.000 characters): WWTF provides substantial funding for scientific projects covering all project related direct costs plus a maximum of 20% overheads (i.e., „indirect costs“). Therefore, WWTF requires an explanation of your cost planning and detailed calculations of personnel costs (which should comprise the major part of the project related costs) as well as planning of project related costs for equipment, consumables, travelling, publications, organization of workshops/ conferences/ ... and other project related costs
- Last but not least you must **disclose other applications for funding** of the same project: Is this project (or parts of it) already subject to ongoing requests for funding?

5. Affirmations and Authorization

WWTF requires the Principal Investigator and Core Team Members to sign a print-out of the affirmation form.

In addition, WWTF requires that the print-out contains the signatures of the authorized person(s) of all participating institutions to which the persons signing the “Authorization” are affiliated in case of funding. The names of the person(s) signing the authorization for each hosting institution have to be inserted into the provided text-boxes in the system.

| Institution | Signing person | Date, stamp, signature |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| University/Research Institute 1 |  | * |
| University/Research Institute 2 |  | * |
| University/Research Institute 3 |  | * |

Then download the forms (“Download Part II/5 as PDF document” at the bottom of the section “Affirmations and Authorizations”) and have these signed, together with the date and a legible stamp. If multiple signatures are required from one institution you can use the same form multiple times or add the additional signatures below the provided boxes. Multiple copies of the respective pages may be used for signing. Faxed or scanned and printed pages are accepted. A maximum of 6 pages may be uploaded in this section.

Additional institutions have to sign the section “Authorizations” for the submission of the full proposal.

In Case of Funding

The **Formal Funding Contract** will be between WWTF and the Home Institution of the Principal Investigator (for universities according to §27 of the University Law 2002), the PI has full scientific and financial responsibility. Projects may start immediately but should **not start later than 6 months** after the formal funding decision has been made. During the project duration WWTF pays funding rates half a year in advance to the PI’s Home Institution. The PI is then responsible for the distribution to the partner institutions (if applicable).

WWTF monitoring during the runtime of the projects includes annual online reports delivered by the PI to WWTF with an overview on the scientific results achieved, personnel employment and funding spent as well as project outputs. WWTF office also makes site-visits to learn about the project progress and working environment of the personnel employed. WWTF offers the possibility to adapt the work plan according to project needs.

After the project has ended a comprehensive final report must be submitted online. WWTF may organize an **ex-post evaluation** by international peers („Evaluation Day“) for all projects funded within a specific call.