

SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY

—

Life Sciences 2024

W|W|T|F

Synthetic Biology

Life Sciences Call 2024

→ This call targets research projects that draw upon the **design and construction approaches** of synthetic biology to further understanding of a **fundamental question in the life sciences**.

Scope of the Call

This call is open to teams that seek to address a biological or clinical research question through the *de novo* development or redesign of biological components or systems. Projects may target structures and functions from the molecular to system levels and must traverse biological scales. Approaches should demonstrate significant methodological innovation and may include biological, chemical, physical, and/or technological means. Interdisciplinary collaboration between biologists, clinicians and researchers from additional fields is highly encouraged.

Who can apply?

- Core research team of up to three principal investigators (PIs)
- The coordinating PI must be based at a university or research institute in Vienna
- Co-PIs may be based outside of Vienna (funding limited to 20% of total budget)
- Co-PIs from Lower Austria may apply for up to 49% of total budget (Joint Project)

Project Duration

24 – 48 months

Funding

- Call volume: € 6.5 million
- Project budget: € 400,000 to € 900,000 (Joint Projects up to € 950,000)
- Maximum 40% non-personnel costs
- Up to 20% overhead costs

Timeline

- Short proposal deadline: April 9, 2024, 2pm CET
- Full proposal deadline: August 20, 2024, 2pm CET
- Applicant response phase: between November 14 – 26, 2024 (*exact dates TBD*)
- Funding decision: December 2024
- Project start: latest June 2025

Process

- Two-stage selection process with
- International jury
- International peer-review
- Application via WWTF Funding Portal

Call Specifications

Synthetic Biology

Life Sciences Call 2024

Version: 30.01.2024

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ATTENTION: The WWTF is introducing an “Applicant Response Phase” for the first time in the Life Sciences Call 2024. Please see additional information in Sections 3 and 12.3 regarding the indicative dates and key details about this new step in the evaluation of full proposals.

1. About this document

This document specifies the process, criteria, and instrument of the Life Sciences Call 2024. It is intended for applicants wishing to submit a proposal in this project call. For further information regarding funding and submission guidelines, as well as references to WWTF policies, please also consider the following documents:

Submission Guideline – Short Proposal	Guide to creating, editing and submitting a short proposal in the WWTF Funding Portal
WWTF Funding Guideline	General Guideline for WWTF funding activities
Guideline for Good Scientific Practice	Guidelines by the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity
Open Science Policy	Open Science Policy of WWTF
Gender Equality Strategy & Plan	Gender Equality Strategy & Plan of WWTF
Reporting and Accounting Guideline	Specifies reporting and accounting for funded projects

For the submission of the proposal, please go to the [WWTF Funding Portal](#).

2. Scope of the call

The “Synthetic Biology” call is issued within the WWTF Life Sciences Programme. The following requirements and guidelines for projects delineate the scope of this call:

- Projects may seek to develop new biological parts/devices/systems, or to redesign existing biological systems for a specific purpose.
- Projects may target biological structures and functions from the molecular to cellular to system levels. In its overall scope, the submitted project should traverse biological scales and involve at least two of the three aforementioned levels.

- Projects may be motivated by a better understanding of a biological system through its reconstruction, or by bioengineering of a new component/system to serve a specific function.
- Projects should demonstrate significant methodological innovation in addition to advancing understanding of a fundamental biological or clinical research question.
- Biological systems may be targeted and manipulated through a variety of means. These may include, but are not limited to, biological, chemical, mechanical, electrical, and technological approaches.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration between biological/clinical sciences and additional fields (e.g., chemistry, physics, engineering, computer science, mathematics) is highly encouraged.

Please note that the following projects are deemed to be outside the scope of this call:

- Projects focusing exclusively on design of genomes, genetic circuits, or biomolecules, which do not extend significantly further to the cellular or system levels.
- Projects focusing solely on development of methods or technology (e.g., molecular assays, robotic platforms), in the absence of a motivating life science research question.
- Projects focusing on biomanufacturing with the principal aim of optimising production processes (e.g., pharmaceuticals, food, biofuels).

3. Submission

This call follows a two-stage selection process:

- **Short proposals:** Short outline of the project idea and the approach. Detailed budget is not required.
- **Full proposals:** Proposals selected by the jury are invited to submit an extended proposal, including detailed project budget. Applicants will have the opportunity to respond in writing to the external reviews of the full proposal.

Short proposal deadline: April 9, 2024, 2pm CET

Full proposal deadline: August 20, 2024, 2pm CET

Applicant response phase: November 14 – 26, 2024 (*Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be notified of exact dates in early November*)

Important information for your submission

- Applications must be submitted via the [WWTF Funding Portal](#). All application information will be processed via this system. **No hard copies** of documents are required.

- All core team members, i.e., coordinating PI (PI&C) and co-PIs, may access and edit the proposal. **Only the PI&C can submit the proposal.**
- The structure of the proposal and steps for completing the application in the WWTF Funding Portal are described in more detail in the [Submission Guideline](#).
- **Signatures of the authorized signatory at each partner institution** (“authorization”) are required in the application process (both for the short and the full proposals). Please contact your institution’s research service in advance and inform yourself about your institute’s internal processes and timelines.
- We recommend registering and creating a proposal even if you are not completely certain that you will submit a proposal. Creating a proposal will allow you to see the specific requirements. Proposals that have been created but not submitted will be deleted shortly after the submission deadline.
- Applications must be written **in English**.

4. Eligibility of applicants and roles in the project

The general eligibility of applicants is specified in the [WWTF Funding Guideline](#).

A project’s **core team** may include **up to three Principal Investigators (PIs)**. This includes one PI&C and up to two co-PIs.

- Core team members may share equal management and scientific roles in the projects.
- The core team must have an excellent scientific track record and demonstrate the ability to conduct the proposed research project.
- WWTF especially encourages young and female scientists to apply as PI.
- Each **core team member must submit a CV**, which will form part of the evaluation.
- A researcher may appear as a core team member (i.e., PI&C, co-PI) in a maximum of two proposals in this call. In case of additional proposals with the same PI, WWTF will accept the first two proposals submitted. Involvement in other past/ongoing WWTF projects does not impact upon eligibility to apply in this call.

One PI must be designated as **PI&C**.

- For legal and administrative reasons (funding contract, reporting), WWTF requires a PI&C to be named. The PI&C will be the contact person for WWTF regarding all aspects of the project.
- The PI&C must have an affiliation at a Viennese research institution, which will serve as the legal contract partner. This also applies to researchers moving to Vienna, who will have a Viennese affiliation in case of funding.
- The PI&C should be an expert in an area relevant to the topic of the proposal. He/she must have an excellent scientific track record and a proven capability to manage projects.

Up to two **co-PIs** may also be named in the core team.

- WWTF recognizes that co-PIs may have equally significant scientific roles in the project. However, the PI&C will be regarded as the main contact person for the project.
- Co-PIs may be based in Vienna, Lower Austria or elsewhere (in Austria or internationally). Geographic and budgetary conditions differ between regular WWTF projects and Joint Projects (see below and Section 5).

Additional **project partners and collaborators** are permitted in the research team. They can be added by name in the full proposal stage.

- Industry partners are not eligible for funding but may partake with in-kind funding or financial contribution.
- Non-academic collaboration partners (e.g., NGOs) may be part of the research team. However, the core team members and majority of additional team members in the proposal should have an academic background.

Research partners outside Vienna:

- For regular WWTF projects, project partners outside of Vienna may receive up to 20% (i.e., <20%) of the total requested funding.
- This call operates under the “Joint Projects” agreement with the Province of Lower Austria. For the criteria and conditions that exist for partners from Lower Austria, see Section 5.

5. Specifics of Joint Projects with partners in Lower Austria

WWTF welcomes **Joint Project (JP)** applications between Viennese and Lower Austrian universities and research institutions in this call. The aims of this [initiative](#) are to promote cooperation between researchers in Lower Austria and Vienna on equal terms, and to strengthen collaborations across research institutions in the greater Vienna region.

- To incentivize the cooperation, the total maximum funding amount for a JP consortium is € 950,000 (i.e., an additional € 50,000 compared to the maximum for the regular WWTF project).
- The PI&C must be affiliated to a Vienna research institution.
- At least one co-PI must be affiliated to a research institution in Lower Austria.
- The percentage of the overall funding allocated to an institution in Lower Austria must be >20% and <50%. In case that the Lower Austrian share is ≤20%, the project is considered as a regular WWTF project and is not eligible for the higher maximum funding amount.

- The Lower Austrian share is financed by the Province of Lower Austria. Hence, the Lower Austrian project partner must comply with the Lower Austrian Culture Promotion Act 1996 and the directives issued on the basis thereof.¹ Details will be regulated in the funding contract.
- Partners outside Vienna or Lower Austria are also possible and may request up to 20% (i.e., <20%) of the total budget. However, the share of the budget allocated to partner(s) in Vienna must be at least 50% (i.e., ≥50%).
- Regional branches of Viennese Institutions (e.g., BOKU, VetMed, AIT) located in Lower Austria are considered as Vienna-based in the context of WWTF funding activities.
- A conversion between JPs and normal WWTF projects is not possible between short and full proposal phase.

6. Content and structure of the proposal

The content and structure of the proposal are defined and specified in the online Funding Portal. An overview of the main parts of the short and full proposals is provided below:

Short proposal	Full proposal
Scientific abstract	Lay summary and scientific abstract
Project description (about 4-5 pages): outline of the main scientific idea and approach	Project description (about 12-15 pages): elaboration of the research idea and approach
Project core team: CVs and roles in project	Project core team and further collaboration partners: CVs and roles in project of core team members
Budget overview	Detailed budget
Signatures: required from the institutions of the core team members	Signatures: required from all participating institutes

Please note that the short proposal is intended for a jury panel with expertise covering a range of proposals, while the full proposal is primarily aimed at experts in the specific topics of the proposal.

For more details about submitting a short proposal, please see [Submission Guideline – Short Proposal](#).

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be provided with an additional Submission Guideline specifically for the second phase. This document will give details about submitting a full proposal, along with guidelines regarding the scope and structure of the applicant response phase.

¹ https://www.noef.gv.at/noef/Wissenschaft-Forschung/Richtlinien_zum_Noef_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz_1996_2.pdf

7. Funding and evaluation criteria

The following criteria are used in the evaluation.

- **Scope:** Is the project within the scope of the call as described in the Call Specifications? Projects that are not within the thematic scope will be immediately rejected by the jury, regardless of scientific quality.

The key criteria in the evaluation of proposals are **scientific excellence of the project and applicants:**

- **Innovative character of the proposed research project:** Does the proposed research work meet the highest relevant international quality standards? Does the project address a significant and fundamental research question in the life sciences using the principles of synthetic biology? Does the project demonstrate significant methodological innovation?
- **Scientific excellence and academic potential of the applicant(s):** Accomplishments and potential of the applicants to conduct the proposed research (measured by academic age).

Further criteria:

- **Relevance and impact:** What are the mid- to long-term academic impacts of the advancements expected from the project?
- **Feasibility:** Is the timeframe sufficient for carrying out the project? Are the proposed resources suitable to achieve the goals? Is the budget adequate?
- **Data management:** How will research data be managed and shared? Has the sustainability and impact of new resources been considered? Please also consider WWTF's [Open Science Policy](#).
- **Team composition and interdisciplinary collaboration:** Teams should include an appropriate mix of expertise, bringing together researchers from the required scientific disciplines. A clear description of the roles of the individual partners and a clear project management plan must be presented.
- **Gender aspects:** Have sex- and/or gender-related aspects of the research field and research question been considered in the project? Has gender balance in the research team been adequately addressed? For WWTF's **Gender Equality Strategy & Plan** and considerations for drafting the proposal, see Section 9 below.

The proposal should include plans on addressing and building gender balance in the research team. Please note that **career breaks** such as for parental leave, care duty and prolonged illness will be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposals. In order for these to be considered, please provide the relevant time periods in the CVs.

Please note that the short proposal will be evaluated by a jury panel, who will be asked to act as generalists when evaluating proposals. In contrast, the full proposal will additionally be evaluated by reviewers with specific expertise in the topics of the proposal. Thus, an appropriate level of scientific detail should be provided at each stage to allow evaluation of the proposal by the respective audience. For more information about the selection process, see Section 12.

8. Eligible costs

All costs that are directly attributable to the project and are regarded as commonly required in the respective scientific field are eligible for funding. Please also consider your organization's internal guidelines for eligible expenses/costs.

8.1. Personnel costs

WWTF is dedicated to funding researchers. Hence, the larger share of the project's budget should be allocated to personnel costs for researchers working on the project.

- Eligible forms of employment contracts are full-time and part-time contracts as well as marginal employments ("Arbeitsvertrag"). Contracts for services ("Werkvertrag") are only permitted if the nature of the work means that it cannot be performed through employment contracts.
- All persons employed through a WWTF-funded project should receive a fair employment contract with at least a minimum wage according to the "Kollektivvertrag" (collective agreement) of the Austrian Universities / non-university research institutions. For staff employed at institutions without a collective agreement, the minimum wage should adhere to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF salary scheme available online).
- Salaries higher than those stipulated in the collective agreement are possible, subject to the agreement from the host institution and justification based on qualifications of the researcher.
- Due to projected inflation rates, the budget calculation for salaries in the Funding Portal automatically includes an increase of 6% p.a. for the duration of the project.
- Applications for personnel costs must be in one of the following categories:
 - **Senior Personnel:** highly qualified scientists, usually permanently employed
 - **Post Doc:** or equivalent qualification, including Senior Postdocs
 - **PhD Student:** or equivalent qualification level
 - **Diploma Student:** Bachelor or Master students
 - **Office/Technician:** administrative or technicians (proportional funding only)
- Personnel costs cannot be claimed for permanent senior staff who are already fully financed by the institution. Exceptions apply in cases where senior staff must acquire third party funding for co-financing their own position (e.g., non-university research institutions and Universities of Applied Sciences). In these cases, permanently employed senior staff may claim up to 20% of their annual salary from WWTF.

8.2. Non-Personnel costs

- Running costs for basic infrastructure (telephone costs, rents) as well as costs for the acquisition of infrastructure and basic equipment are not eligible for funding, as these should be covered by the category "overhead costs".
- Non-personnel should not exceed 40% of the overall budget.

- **Equipment:** Smaller equipment can be purchased with funds from the grant. This includes devices up to € 1,500 each, as well as software specific to the projects. General office software is not eligible for funding. Funding by WWTF under this scheme is not intended to cover investment in general and larger infrastructure. However, pro rata depreciation rates over the project duration for equipment necessary to the project may be funded.
- **Consumables:** Costs for project-related expenses like consumables are permitted. WWTF does not fund consumables that are general and not project-specific (e.g., paper, printer toner).
- **Travel costs:** Costs for travel and accommodation for scientific meetings and conferences, field work, expeditions may be funded. Please also consider the regulations of your organization for travel costs.
- **Publication costs:** Costs incurred for publication activities, e.g., printing costs, article processing charges (for open science), etc. are allowed. This also includes costs for archiving research data in open repositories. Please also consider the [Open Science Policy](#).
- **Workshop/conferences:** Costs for organizing events, workshops, and conferences as well as for hosting invited speakers are eligible.
- **Other costs:** Third-party costs, namely, for external collaboration, consulting, studies, and software development may be funded to a limited extent. In general, individuals should be predominantly funded through employment contracts at the participating institutions and not through other types of employment. Under special conditions, costs for childcare and/or career coaching for female WWTF-funded personnel may be requested to a small degree.

8.3. Indirect costs (overheads)

WWTF pays a maximum of 20% overhead. Overhead is calculated as a percentage of the direct costs of the project (i.e., personnel + non-personnel costs). Please note that WWTF offers the maximum 20% overhead lump sum to compensate for all administration costs. This means that flat fees for payroll or project accounting are not eligible. The total funding volume is calculated as direct plus indirect costs.

Applicants are required to comply with the overhead regulations of the involved institutions.

9. Gender aspects in the application phase

WWTF's [Gender Strategy and Gender Equality Plan](#) must be considered throughout the application. Please note that WWTF requests jury members and reviewers to take into account both gender and specific roles in research team composition, as well as gender in research content during evaluation processes.

The following questions should be considered during development of the proposal:

- **Equal opportunities in research**

- Please take into consideration gender balance/equality in the project consortium at all levels, including in decision-making positions, e.g., what steps have been taken to approach / achieve it?
- Do working conditions allow all members of staff to combine work and family life in a satisfactory manner?
- Are there mechanisms in place to manage and monitor gender equality aspects, e.g., workforce statistics?
- **Gender in research content and in the research ideas phase**
 - If the research involves humans as research objects, has the relevance of gender to the research topic been analysed?
 - If the research does not directly involve humans, have potentially differentiated relations of men and women to the research subject (e.g., relevance, impact of findings) been sufficiently considered?
 - Have literature and other sources relating to gender differences in the research field been consulted?
- **Proposal phase**
 - Does the methodology ensure that (possible) gender differences will be investigated: that sex/ gender differentiated data will be collected and analysed throughout the research cycle and will be part of the final publication?
 - Does the proposal explicitly and comprehensively explain how gender issues will be handled?
 - If there are no identifiable gender aspects after a detailed review by the applicants, this must be justified, e.g., by providing reasons to demonstrate that no sex, gender, and other relevant differences have been found.
- **Research phase**
 - If there are further aspects of the project in which sex/gender could be a factor (e.g., samples, testing groups), are these gender-balanced?
 - Are questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in your data?
 - Is data analysed according to the sex variable? Are other relevant variables analysed with respect to sex?

Further resources are listed in the footnote.²

² Gender in Research Toolkit by Yellow Window: <https://www.yellowwindow.com/genderinresearch>
Gendered Innovations, Stanford University: <http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/methods-sex-and-gender-analysis.html>
Canadian Institutes of Health Research: <https://www.cihr-irsc-igh-isfh.ca/>

10. Guidelines for good scientific practice and ethics

Compliance with the **rules for good scientific practice**, including the observance of ethical aspects in research, is mandatory. This pertains to the application process and, in case of funding, the research work.

- WWTF is member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI) and thus committed to their standards for good scientific practice. Hence, applicants must comply to OeAWI standards.³
- In case of suspected scientific misconduct, WWTF will employ the ombudsperson at the applicant's institution or request OeAWI to investigate the case.
- Based on the outcome of investigations by the ombudsperson or OeAWI, WWTF reserves the right to exclude the applicants and the application from the involved and future calls.

Project proposals may include **ethical aspects** that require the approval from an ethics committee/institutional review board.

- If the approval from the ethics committee/institutional review board is required for the planned project this must be clearly stated at the short proposal stage. The approval ("Votum") must be submitted online with the full proposal.
- Should it not be possible to obtain a final ethical approval before the full proposal deadline due to reasons which are beyond the control of the applicant, the applicant must explain the reasons in the application and send the preliminary approval to the responsible call manager before the jury meeting.
- The approval by the ethics committee should 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 proposed project, a statement must be provided (in the online Funding Portal), confirming that the approval will cover the planned research.
- If the main applicant for the ethical approval is not a core team member (i.e., PI&C or co-PI) of the WWTF proposal, a clear statement must be included in the proposal, in which a 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 must submit the extension of the approval ("Verlängerung der Gültigkeit des Votums"). The above also applies for extensions.
- Non-compliance will result in the rejection of the proposal on formal grounds.

³ <https://oeawi.at/en/guidelines/>

11. Open Science

WWTF requires compliance with its [Open Science Policy](#). This document outlines the rights, roles, and responsibilities of WWTF, researchers, and research organizations.

12. Selection and decision process

Applications must be submitted via the online Funding Portal in the specified timeframes. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

The core element of WWTF's decision making processes is an **international jury** mandated to make a funding recommendation to the WWTF boards.

- Depending on the call (size, scope etc) the jury is comprised of 6-12 outstanding international experts that have no current affiliation to an Austrian institution.
- Jury members are selected by WWTF according to their expertise in the call topic. They have no known conflict of interest prior to the submission deadline. For details, see section on evaluation below.
- The names of jury members will be published on the WWTF website after the WWTF Board of Directors finalize the formal funding decision.
- Please note that WWTF does not allow the opportunity for rebuttals to either recommendations by the jury panel or decisions by the WWTF Board of Directors

12.1. Formal eligibility check by WWTF

WWTF office will conduct a formal eligibility check of the proposal based on the criteria outlined in the [WWTF Funding Guideline](#), and this document. This includes:

- All required signatures from the appropriate persons are uploaded.
- All projects will be checked for plagiarism with software.
- Submission of the same or highly similar research ideas at other funding organizations, which must be explicitly declared in the full proposal. Application for funding at other organizations is permitted and will not impact the evaluation. In case of funding, applicants will be asked by which organization they wish to be funded, as double funding is not permitted by WWTF.

Substantial deficiencies and missing sections in the application will lead to the exclusion of the application from further evaluation and rejection on formal grounds. The strict timeline of the call does not allow for proposals to be sent back to the applicants for amendments.

12.2. Evaluation of short proposals

- Each proposal is independently assessed by at least two jury members based on the evaluation criteria.

- The jury decides in a meeting (on-site or online) if a short proposal should be invited to the full proposal stage. This usually takes place 1-2 months after the short proposal submission deadline.
- All applicants will be promptly informed about the decision. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a short jury statement explaining the decision. Successful applicants will be informed that they are invited to submit a full-length proposal.

12.3. Evaluation of full proposals

- All duly submitted full proposals are checked again for formal aspects. Proposals which do not meet the formal requirements will be rejected at this stage.
- The information provided in the full proposal must be consistent with the short proposal and extend it by providing more information and details. Major deviations to the short proposal must be justified explicitly. If major deviations cannot be satisfactorily explained, it may be rejected by the jury at this stage.

Eligible full proposals will undergo a **review process**.

- WWTF will obtain a minimum of two (usually 3-4) written reviews for each proposal.
- Reviewers are international experts in the topic(s) of the proposals. WWTF does not contact reviewers based in Austria. WWTF aims for diversity in the cohort of reviewers for a call (gender, age, countries).
- All reviewers will be checked by the WWTF office for potential conflicts of interests with the applicants. As a rule, reviewers should not have close professional relations to any of the applicants in the project team. Practically, this excludes reviewers that have published with the applicants within the last five years or have had a collaboration in a research project in this timeframe. In case of very close cooperation with the applicant(s) over a longer period of time, the reviewer will also be excluded. Joint publications in an edited volumes/proceeding, “community papers” with more than 30 authors or common attendances in workshops and conferences do not qualify as conflict of interest. Additionally, reviewers are asked to disclose any potential conflict of interest.
- Reviewers will be asked to provide their assessment of the proposal through a standardised online questionnaire.
- The expert reviewers remain anonymous to the applicants.
- Jury members nominate reviewers. In addition, in the full proposal submissions, applicants are asked to suggest 5 experts whom they deem qualified to review the proposal. WWTF office will check the reviewers for potential conflict of interests. WWTF office is free to choose/not to choose any of the suggested experts.
- Applicants may also exclude up to 3 persons without stating any reasons. Reviewers on the negative list will not be contacted.

Applicants will have the opportunity to **respond** in writing to the external reviews.

- The purpose of the applicant response step is to allow correction of any factual errors or misunderstandings, or to respond directly to questions raised in the external reviews.
- The length of the applicant response will be limited to the equivalent of one A4 page of text. The response must be entered as text in the Funding Portal. Pictures, graphs, or other documents cannot be inserted or attached.
- Applicants will be given 7 calendar days to view and respond to the peer reviews. While the exact dates for the applicant response step are not fixed, an indicative time period is provided in Section 3.
- All core team members will receive an email notification when the applicant response step is open in the Funding Portal.
- Submission of a response to reviews is not compulsory. However, the jury panel will be informed that all teams were provided with the opportunity to respond to reviews.
- More details about the scope and process of the applicant response phase will be available to core teams invited to submit a full proposal.

12.4. Full proposal jury meeting

The jury will convene about 3-4 months after the submission deadline of the full proposals to select full proposals to recommend for funding. The jury may be extended by additional members in case supplementary expertise is needed to cover the topics of the proposals. At least two jury members are assigned to each proposal and act as rapporteurs for the proposals.

- The basis for the evaluation by the jury are the full proposals, the external reviews, and the applicant's response to reviews. The arguments brought forward in the review reports will be carefully balanced with the jury's own expertise.
- The result is a recommendation for each project: "to be funded" or "not to be funded".

12.5. Formal funding decision

The jury recommendation will be formally confirmed first by the WWTF Advisory Board and then approved by the WWTF Board of Directors.

- Applicants will be promptly informed about the decision.
- The decision may include budget cuts as well as additional conditions and recommendations.
- Unsuccessful applicants will receive a short statement by the jury explaining the main reasons why the project was not selected for funding.

13. Funding contract

In case of funding, WWTF office will contact the PI&C to draw up the funding contract.

- The PI&C will be provided with the necessary documents for the contracts.
- Projects may start immediately and should start no later than 6 months after the formal funding decision by the WWTF Board of Directors.
- The formal funding contract will be signed between WWTF and the host institution of the PI&C. In Joint Projects, the host institution of the co-PI in Lower Austria is an additional contract partner.
- For universities, this is a project according to §27 of the Universities Act 2002. The institution then authorizes the respective PI to sign for the full scientific and financial responsibility of the project.

14. Monitoring and reporting

Funded teams are committed to delivering reports and participating in evaluation and monitoring. WWTF offers the possibility to adapt the work plan according to project needs. For details see the [Reporting and Accounting Guideline](#).