ME/CFS Call 2024

Understanding ME/CFS

Information Session
26th March 2024

Benjamin Missbach
Grace Liu

Agenda

▶ Introduction to WWTF & WE & ME Foundation

▶ "Understanding ME/CFS" Call
  ▶ Important considerations for the proposal
  ▶ Key facts and steps of call
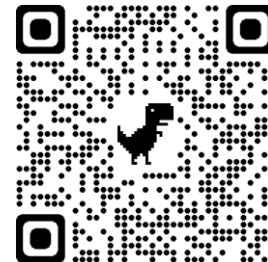
▶ Using the WWTF Funding Portal

▶ Q & A

Find a match | Networking platform

W|W|T|F

▶ Showcase your expertise and current/future project ideas

▶ Search for and contact researchers with complementary expertise

▶ Identify partners in Vienna/Lower Austria for Joint Projects

Register and connect!

https://me-cfs-2024.b2match.io/

ME/CFS 24 | Call documents

→ *https://www.wwtf.at/funding/programmes/ei/#ME-CFS24*

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→ *New WWTF Wiki, feedback appreciated*
https://wiki.wwtf.at/books/mecfs-call-2024-
understanding-mecfs/chapter/submission-guideline

Agenda

▶ **Introduction to WWTF + WE & ME Foundation**

▶ "Understanding ME/CFS" Call

   ▶ Important considerations for the proposal

   ▶ Key facts and steps of call

▶ Using the WWTF Funding Portal

▶ Q & A

WWTF | Key facts

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▶ Private/public non-profit research funder in Austria

▶ Since 2002: approx. € 265 Mio in funding (private foundation, City of Vienna)

▶ Funding per year: €15-17 Mio.

▶ WWTF's mission:
  ▶ Funding top scientific research in Vienna
  ▶ Providing substantial funding for larger research projects and international research group leaders coming to Vienna
  ▶ Running competitive calls according to highest international standards

WWTF | Funding schemes

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Thematic programmes

Life Sciences (*2003)

Information and Communication Technology (*2008)

Cognitive Sciences (*2011)

Environmental Systems Research (*2017)

Funding instruments

Projects

Vienna Research Groups

Additional Funding Measures

Disclaimer: How is this call financed?

— Call Volume of this exploratory call: **€600,000**
— WE&ME Foundation & WWTF in equal shares, **€300k each**

Handling of the call → WWTF

ME/CFS24 | Timeline

w|w|T|F

Explorative Phase

Consolidating Phase

03/24
Call Start

09/24
Jury Meeting #1

09/26
Jury Meeting #2

18th of June, 2pm
Deadline
Proposals

Q1/25
Start: Explorative Projects

Q1/27
Start: Consolidating Projects

Max. 15 months

About WE&ME

– WE&ME, formerly known as 'Tempi Foundation,' was founded in 2020 by the Ströck family in Vienna.

– The family has been directly affected since 2016, with 2 sons being ME/CFS patients, leading to the recognition of a shortage of ME/CFS professionals and a lack of awareness and support.

– In August 2023, WE&ME was relaunched and has since raised around 150k in donations.

– Gerhard and Gabriele Ströck have invested approximately 1.5 million in ME/CFS research and projects so far.

Our Mission

WE & ME
Foundation

– Funding ME/CFS research
– Building a better support and care system for ME/CFS patients
– Awareness

"With a sense of urgency, we rally for recognition, education, and research, aiming to ensure that every individual with ME/CFS receives the compassionate and effective care, as well as the necessary support they deserve, and ultimately a cure."

Previously funded WE&ME projects

WE & ME
Foundation

- Prof. PhD Akiko Iwasaki YALE School of Medicine in collaboration with PolyBio Research Foundation

- The first austrian ME/CFS BioBank, led by Prof. Untersmayr-Elsenhuber / MedUni Vienna

- "Unraveling ME/CFS" collaboration Cornell University (Assoc. Prof. Iwijn de Vlaminck and Prof. Maureen Hanson) Clinic Favoriten Vienna (Dr. Max Augustin and Univ.-Prof. Dr. Alexander Zoufaly and Sigmund Freud University in collboration with neurologist Dr. Michael Stingl

- More projects: https://www.weandmecfs.org/research

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► Q & A

ME/CFS 24 | Facts

- Call Volume: 600,000 €

- Project up to 100,000 €

- Duration : 12 – 15 months

- Timeline

  - Call Start: March 2024

  - Proposal deadline: 18. June 2024 – 2pm

  - Jury Meeting: September 2024

  - Funding decision: October 2024

  - Project Start: <u>latest 01/2025</u>

W|W|T|F

IT'S A TUESDAY
The Funding Portal will close
automatically **at 2pm on 18th June,
2024**

ME/CFS 24 | Scope of call

"This is a call for **small exploratory research projects** that address **fundamental research questions** to **advance understanding** of post-acute infectious diseases such as **ME/CFS**. The aim of this call is to **generate preliminary data**."

ME/CFS24 | Scope of call I

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▶ Advance our understanding of etiopathogenesis, diagnostics and/or therapy of post-acute infectious diseases, namely ME/CFS.

▶ All disciplines invited, especially from

- clinical research

- (bio)medical research

- computer sciences

▶ Highly welcome are projects that

- push the state of the art

- bring together experimental & clinical approaches (Translational)

- bring together approaches from different scientific disciplines (Interdisciplinary)

ME/CFS24 | Scope of call II

► **Phenotypic Characteristics**: The definition of ME/CFS must be based on either of these international consensus criteria

- Canadian Consensus Criteria (CCC) or the revised CCC
- International Consensus Criteria
- NICE Guidelines for ME/CFS
- IOM 2015 Diagnostic Criteria

► **Other post-acute infectious diseases** can also be investigated as part of the projects. Post-exertional malaise needs to be a decisive inclusion criterion for the post-acute infectious disease to be investigated, e.g. Long Covid

► Please note that solely observational projects in clinical settings and health service research do not fit the scope of this call

ME/CFS24 | Interdisciplinarity

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► Meaningful interdisciplinary projects are strongly encouraged

    ► Keep in mind: interdisciplinarity is a team effort!

► Expertise may be within the same research group, traverse research groups or institutions

Evaluation Process

Formal check by WWTF Office

− Online submission until 18. June - 2pm

− All required signatures from respective institutions (PI&C, Co-pi & partner organisations)

Jury meeting in September (4-6 international Jury members)

− Assessment by at least two jury members prior to meeting

− Discussion of all proposals within scope

− Funding recommendation by international expert jury

Formal decision in October

− WWTF boards formally confirms jury recommendation

− Information of applicants about decision

Evaluation Criteria

▶ **Scope** … as described in the call specifications. Projects which are not within the thematic scope will be immediately rejected by the jury

▶ **Scientific quality, novelty to generate preliminary data & interdisciplinarity**

– Scientific excellence and academic potential of the applicant(s)

– Innovative character of the proposed research project

– Team composition and interdisciplinary collaboration

▶ **Further criteria** include relevance and academic & clinical impact, feasibility of the proposed project plan, Data management and Gender aspects.
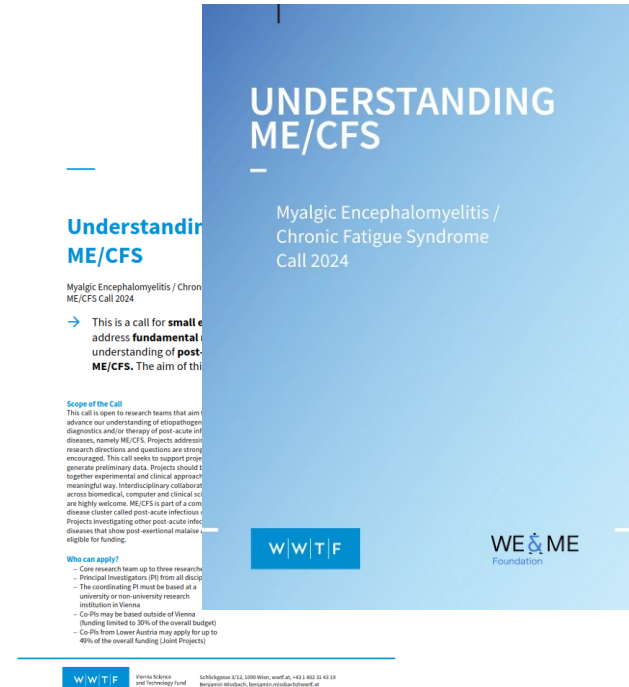
WWTF | Open Science Policy

WWTF aims to:

► fund research guided by principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary"

► provide funds related to the cost of OA publication and data management

► place more emphasis on Open Data by adoption of FAIR principles

→ *https://wwtf.at/funding/our-principles/downloads/open-access-and-open-science-policy*

WWTF | Data Management

► Brief explanation regarding how data and/or code generated in project will be managed and made available

► We strongly encourage to develop a data management plan in your project *(Note: if your project will be funded, details will be discussed during contracting)*
  ► Documentation and metadata that accompanies data
  ► Ethical and legal aspects
  ► Process to store, preserve and share data

WWTF | Gender Equality Plan

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WWTF:

▶ Encourages gender-balanced teams and more female researchers to apply as PIs of research projects

▶ Uses evaluation criteria that account for career breaks

▶ Strives for gender balance in jury panels and reviewer pools

▶ For more details, see WWTF's Gender Equality Plan

Applicants:

▶ Consider gender and specific roles in research team composition

▶ Address sex and/or gender in research content

▶ Can include Childcare and / or career coaching costs to the budget

▶ *See „Gender aspects in the application phase" in Call Specifications*

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ME/CFS24 | Teams & Budget

▶ Up to 3 researchers per project in <u>core team</u>

    ▶ Coordinating PI: must be affiliated to a Viennese research institution

    ▶ Co-PIs: can be based worldwide

▶ Partner institutions can also be involved in the project (no profit-oriented companies allowed)

▶ Up to 30% total budget may be allocated outside of Vienna

▶ Non-personnel costs should not exceed 40% of the overall budget

▶ <u>For this call, we do not pay overheads</u>

<u>Important: Max. 2 proposals per researcher (as Core Team member)</u>

Joint Projects

▶ Collaborations between researchers from Vienna and Lower Austria

  ▶ Coordinating PI: affiliated to a Viennese research institution

  ▶ Co-PI: at least one based in Lower Austria

▶ Budget

  ▶ Total funding volume also 100,000€

  ▶ Vienna: Min. 51% Budget

  ▶ Lower Austria: 30% - 49% Budget

  ▶ Optional: Other partners up to 30% Budget

Things to Consider

▶ Check the scope of our call, careful reading

▶ Get to know your institution's research office

▶ Read the guidelines → Evaluation criteria (Call Specs)

▶ Don't assume specific expertise of our Jury

▶ Polish your CV, use our template

▶ Pay more than lip service to gender equality & open science

▶ Think realistically about the budget of your project (feasibility!)

nature

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nature > career column > article

CAREER COLUMN | 01 September 2023

A funding adviser's guide to writing a great grant application

Mireille Consalvey draws on years of experience to present a 13-step checklist for success.

https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-023-02756-6

ME/CFS Call 2024
Timeline

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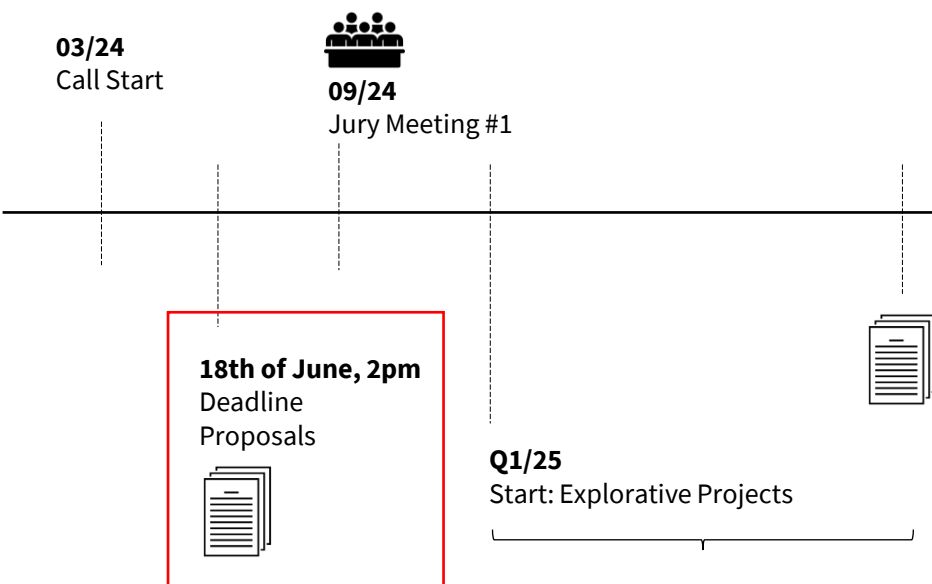
Max. 15 months

Consolidating Phase

09/26
Jury Meeting #2

Q1/27
Start: Consolidating Projects
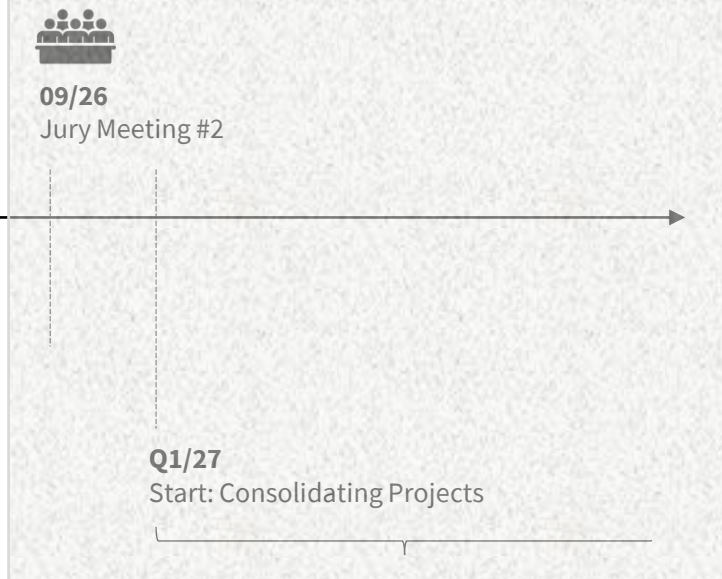
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► **Using the WWTF Funding Portal**

► Q & A

WWTF Funding Portal

► New Funding Portal launched in 2022

    ► Old Submission System will be phased out

Bug or feature!?
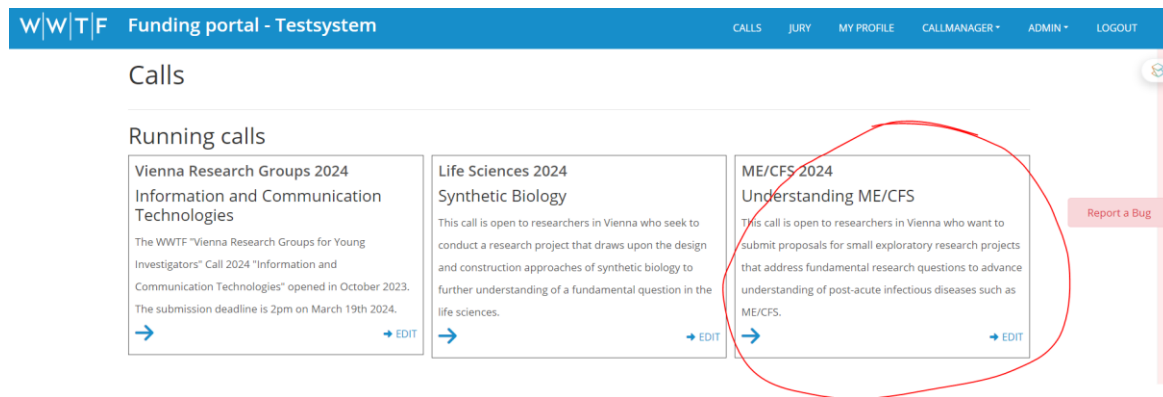
https://fundingportal.wwtf.at/

WWTF Funding Portal | What's new?

WWTF

▶ All core team members can contribute to and edit proposal

  ▶ Only coordinating PI can submit proposal

▶ External parties can create a proposal and invite core team members (e.g. project managers)

▶ Personal information is managed independently of proposals and can be re-used across proposals

▶ Signatures from core team members no longer necessary

  ▶ Authorising signatures from institutes & partner institutions required

  ▶ Please check with your grant service early: "Who needs to sign my proposal?"

WWTF Funding Portal | Steps to submission

W|W|T|F

▶ Register or login

▶ Choose call and create proposal

▶ Invite coordinating PI and co-PIs

▶ Complete "My Profile" and "My Roles"

▶ Chapters to fill out

1. Basic information
2. Personnel and institutions
3. Project

4. Budget
5. Signatures

▶ Submit proposal (<u>only possible by coordinating PI</u>)

https://wiki.wwtf.at/books/mecfs-call-2024-understanding-mecfs/chapter/submission-guideline
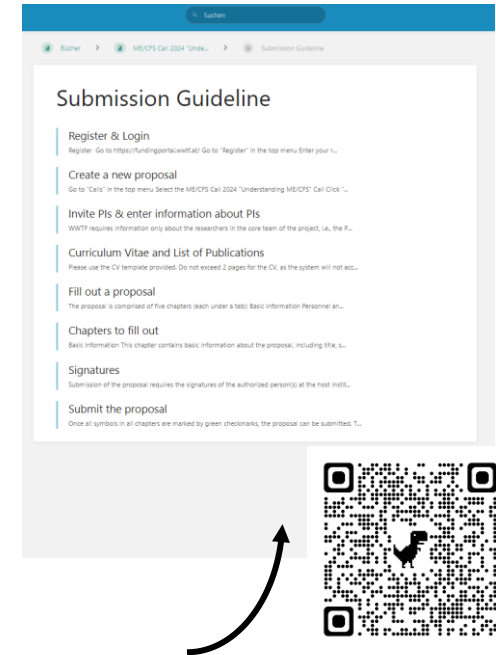
Register & login

▶ First register at https://fundingportal.wwtf.at/register/

▶ If you have an account in the old system, <u>you can re-use these credentials to register</u>

Choose call and create proposal

1. Choose call

2. Click → "Create new proposal"

Proposal chapters

► Proposal divided into 5 chapters

► Click and scroll through chapters to see proposal requirements

W|W|T|F **Funding portal**   CALLS   MY PROPOSALS & ROLES   MY PROFILE   LOGOUT

EI-MECFS -***: Incomplete proposal

| ❗ Basic Information | ❗ Personnel and Institutions | ❗ Project | ❗ Budget | ❗ Signatures |

Invite coordinating PI and co-PIs

W|W|T|F

ME-CFS24-***: Incomplete proposal

❗ Basic Information   ❗ Personnel and Institutions   ❗ Project   ❗ Budget   ❗ Signatures

Personnel and Institutions

Notice

Please note that you can create only five elements in this section (PI + CoPI(s) + Institution(s) ≤ 5).

Principal Investigator and Coordinator

❗ **Principal investigator - invitation** 🗑

First name *	Last name *
Benjamin	Missbach

Email address *	Status
b.missbach@gmail.com	approved, but incompl ⇕

ℹ Please complete your user profile & role in i) "My Profile" and ii) "My Proposals and Roles". Don't forget to ⟳ refresh from profile!

Co-Principal Investigator(s)

➕ Co-Principal Investigator

▶ All core team members must register on Funding Portal and invited to project

▶ Coordinating PI

    ▶ *Either* click "I am the Principal Investigator"

    ▶ *Or* enter details to send invitation to the PI

▶ Co-PIs

    ▶ Also invite with name and email

Add further partner institutions

▶ Up to 2 additional partner institutions

▶ Automatically added to budget

▶ Please organize signatures from partner institutions

Further Partner Institution(s)

Other institutions participating in the project apart from those of PI and Co-PI.

[+ Partner Institution]

🅾 Partner Institution 🗑

Search affiliation		Affiliation *	Region *
	🔍		please select ⇕

ℹ Please try to find and select your affiliation in our database

Institute/Department/Research Group *   Address *

Zip *	City *	Country *
		please select ⇕

You need to complete your Profile!

Please use the correct CV template

✅ **CV Upload**

Available CV Templates:

Please use the CV template for the call in which you intend to submit your proposal

VRG: wwtf_cvtemplate_vrg.docx

all other calls: wwtf_cvtemplate_project.docx

Complete "My roles"

Complete "My roles" in proposal

ESR24-***: Test Project #1

Principal Investigator and Coordinator

Data will be transferred from "My Profile"

Enter specifically for each proposal:
1. Role and responsibilities within the project
2. Specific competencies for the project

Proposal | Basic Information

ME-CFS24-***: Incomplete proposal

| ❗ Basic Information | ❗ Personnel and Institutions | ❗ Project | ❗ Budget | ❗ Signatures |

▶ Title and acronym

▶ Scientific disciplines (must add up to 100%)

▶ Keywords

▶ Project duration

▶ WWTF Project or Joint Project?

WWTF Funding Portal | Error & Help

`W|W|T|F`

⬤! Basic Information   ⬤✓ Personnel and Institutions   ⬤! Project   ⬤! Budget   ⬤! Signatures

Basic Information

⬤✓ ID, Title and Acronym

Proposal ID
LS23-***

ℹ Will be generated after proposal submission

Project title *
Test project 1

⬤! Scientific Disciplines

This will help to categorize your proposal. Please use the ÖFOS categories.

ℹ Provide at least one category; sum must equal 100 %

Main scientific discipline *	Share *	Other scientific discipline *	Share *	Other scientific discipline *	Share *
106052 - Cell biology	60 %	102019 - Machine learning	30 %	106002 - Biochemistry	5 %

Sum of shares should equal 100%

▶ Within the flagged chapter, click on the red symbol beside the section title

▶ Help text in red will explain problem

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Proposal | Project

1. **Lay summary** *(1,000 characters)*
2. **Scientific abstract** *(2,000 characters)*
3. **Work programme:** Please use the template provided. The headings in bold are mandatory *(max. 8 pages including figures)*
    1. Introduction and State-of-the-art
    2. Innovativeness and original contribution
    3. Research questions, objectives and/or hypotheses
    4. Methodological approaches and workplan
    5. Expected outcomes and potential next research steps
    6. Project team and interdisciplinary collaboration
    7. References
4. **Ethical considerations** (*500 characters*)
5. **Data Management** *(500 characters)*

➔ *Gender aspects should be considered throughout and explained where appropriate*

Ethics

An acknowledgement of receipt from the ethics committee/institutional review board must be submitted with the proposal.

The final approval ("Votum") must be submitted to WWTF the latest before project start.

Proposal | Budget

ME-CFS24-***: Incomplete proposal

| ❗ Basic Information | ❗ Personnel and Institutions | ❗ Project | ❗ Budget | ❗ Signatures |

► Personnel + non-personnel costs = total costs

► <u>No overhead costs for this call</u>

► Salaries ≥ minimum wage according to Kollektivvertrag or FWF standards

    ► https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/personnel-costs

► Non-personnel costs should not exceed 40% of total budget

► No funding of companies or industry partners

    ► Self-funded business partners are possible (→ need to bring in money or in-kind)

► Budget allocated outside of Vienna up to 30% of total budget

Proposal | Budget

W|W|T|F

ME-CFS24-***: Incomplete proposal

| ❗ Basic Information | ❗ Personnel and Institutions | ❗ Project | ❗ Budget | ❗ Signatures |

Budget

✅ Budget per Institution

Institution	Personnel costs	Non-personnel costs	Total direct costs	Overheads	Funding applied for	% per institution
Institution 1	240,000 €	135,000 €		20.00 %	75,000 € 450,000 €	56.82 %
Institution 2	190,000 €	95,000 €		20.00 %	57,000 € 342,000 €	43.18 %
Requested funding per cost category	430,000 €	230,000 €	660,000 €		132,000 € 792,000 €	
Requested funding per cost category (%)	65,15 %	34,85 %				

► Institutions of core team members and partner institutes added automatically

► Cost distributions are automatically checked and verified

► Provide brief explanation of cost planning (*1000 characters*)

Proposal | Signatures

ME-CFS24-***: Incomplete proposal

| ❗ Basic Information | ❗ Personnel and Institutions | ❗ Project | ❗ Budget | ❗ Signatures |

► Signatures from core team members no longer necessary

► Signatures from authorising persons at institutions of core team members & partner institutions required

  ► Check with research support, grant offices, etc.

  ► Allow ample time

► Signature sheet can be generated once the project title and core team members' institutes have been entered

► All signature forms are accepted

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Proposal | Signatures

ME-CFS24-***: Incomplete proposal

| ❗ Basic Information | ❗ Personnel and Institutions | ❗ Project | ❗ Budget | ❗ Signatures |

✅ Authorization

In signing the application form, the institution (i.e., an individual authorised and responsible for signing UG §27 projects) certifies that the information provided in the application form is, to the best of their knowledge and belief, accurate and complete. We hereby confirmed that

- the institution agrees to the employment of personnel as well as the provision of an adequate workplace, consumables and equipment and other resources, as well as in-kind contributions (if required in the call documents) as stated in the application
- For "Joint Projects": The institution in Lower Austria confirms compliance with the "NÖ Kulturförderungsgesetz 1996" and the "Richtlinien für die Förderung nach dem NÖ Kulturförderungsgesetz 1996".

Institution	Signing person *	Date, stamp, signature or electronic signature
Institution 1	NN1	
Institution 2	NN2	

✅ Signatures

The upload of multiple files is possible.

➡️ You can generate the signature sheet here after the proposal's title and host institutions of the core team members have been provided.

Signatures *

| Choose file | Browse |

ℹ️ Upload is possible as soon as the section "Personnel and Institutions" is complete.
We only accept PDF format (preferably PDF version 1.4 without any encryption) as upload.

Already uploaded:
📄 ls23_unterschriften.pdf [PDF, 74.10 KB] 🗑️

Reference ID: 006470

📄 PDF   Save   **Submit**

**!DANGER ZONE!
Check PDF before submitting**

Find a match | Networking platform

▶ Showcase your expertise and current/future project ideas

▶ Search for and contact researchers with complementary expertise

▶ Identify partners in Vienna/Lower Austria for Joint Projects

Register and connect!

https://me-cfs-2024.b2match.io/

Q & A

All documents available at wwtf.at

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