

Guide to Writing a Full Proposal

Life Sciences Call 2021 – Chemical Biology

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Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF)
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| | |
|---|----|
| 1. WWTF Projects | 3 |
| 1.1. About WWTF | 3 |
| 1.2. Supporting excellent science in Vienna and Lower Austria | 3 |
| 1.3. Specifics of Joint Projects (JP)..... | 4 |
| 2. Call information | 6 |
| 2.1. Research team and host institutions | 6 |
| 2.2. Eligible costs..... | 6 |
| 2.3. Ethics and good scientific practice | 7 |
| 2.4. Open access policies | 8 |
| 2.5. Evaluation Process | 8 |
| 2.5.1. Formal eligibility check | 8 |
| 2.5.2. Evaluation of full proposals..... | 8 |
| 2.5.3 Formal funding decision | 9 |
| 2.6 Evaluation Criteria..... | 9 |
| 3. Online Submission System..... | 10 |
| 3.1. Login and submission | 10 |
| 3.2 General information for the full proposal | 10 |
| 3.3 Offline sections | 10 |
| 3.4. Online sections | 11 |
| 3.4.1 Project summary | 11 |
| 3.4.2. Research Project (max. 15 pages including figures)..... | 12 |
| 3.4.3. Project Team..... | 12 |
| 3.4.4. Project Budget..... | 13 |
| 3.4.5. Affirmations and Authorization..... | 16 |
| 4. In Case of Funding | 17 |

1. WWTF Projects

1.1. About WWTF

The Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF) is the only larger private non-profit organization in Austria established to promote science and research. WWTF started its funding activities in 2003. As outlined in its statutes, WWTF aims to fund excellent scientific research and researchers in accordance with 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 calls attract strong competition for funding.

WWTF currently runs calls under the following thematic programmes: "Life Sciences" (*2003), "Information and Communication Technology" (*2008), "Cognitive Sciences" (*2011), and "Environmental Systems Research" (*2016). 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 processes lie strictly in the hands of international scientists outside of 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.

1.2. Supporting excellent science in Vienna and Lower Austria

Vienna as an innovation area does not end at the city limits. A "Vienna Innovation Area" is essential in the city's efforts to be recognized as one of the most important centres of research and innovation in Europe. Critically, this includes the networking of research communities. In particular, there is a strong desire from researchers in Vienna and Lower Austria for stronger cooperation. With highly developed tools to facilitate competitive research funding in Vienna, the WWTF is well-placed to support this cooperation. In a valuable gain for all involved parties, a new agreement has enabled cooperation between research institutions in Vienna and Lower Austria in the WWTF funding calls.

In a framework initially limited to three years, the Province of Lower Austria has dedicated a total maximum of € 3 million in fiduciary support to WWTF, i.e. up to € 1 million per year. This

also represents the maximum amount of project funding that can go to Lower Austrian project partners as part of cooperation projects per year.

Both parties are involved in the decision to determine whether the opportunity for these cooperation projects should exist for a specific call. After three years, the possibility and form of the program's continuation will be reviewed.

1.3. Specifics of Joint Projects (JP)

WWTF now also welcomes joint projects between Viennese and Lower Austrian universities and research institutions in its regular project calls. The aim is to encourage applications in which the partners cooperate on equal terms.

To encourage cooperation projects, consortia applying for a Joint Project may request a slightly higher total maximum funding amount. In the Life Science Call 2021, an additional € 70,000 on top of the standard maximum funding amount of € 700,000 (equivalent to 10% of the maximum for a regular WWTF project) may be requested.

The Vienna share (at least 51% of the project sum) is paid by WWTF from its own resources, while the Lower Austrian share (49% maximum) is financed by the Province of Lower Austria.

In summary, in the current Life Science Call, a JP differs from a standard WWTF project in the following aspects:

- The maximum funding volume for a JP is € 70,000 more than the funding volume of a regular WWTF project.
- In both regular WWTF Projects and Joint Projects, the PI and Coordinator must be affiliated to a university or non-university research institution in Vienna. Additionally, in Joint Projects, at least one Co-PI must be affiliated to a research institution in Lower Austria.
- The budget allocated to partners in Vienna must amount to at least 51% of the total budget; the share of the budget going to partners in Lower Austria must be higher than 20% and should not exceed 49% (cooperations with partners in Lower Austria up to 20% are not considered JPs but can be submitted as regular WWTF projects). Partners outside Vienna or Lower Austria are optional and may request up to 20% of the total budget.
- Regional branches of Viennese Institutions (e.g. BOKU, VetMed, AIT) located in Lower Austria are considered Viennese partners.

The Lower Austrian project partner must comply with the Lower Austrian Culture Promotion Act 1996 and the directives issued on the basis thereof ([Richtlinien für Förderung nach dem NÖ Kulturförderungsgesetz 1996](#)).

Please note that, in the case of Joint Project applications, WWTF is required to share documents related to your application and its evaluation process with the Government of Lower Austria.

2. Call information

The **Call Fiche**, which outlines the scientific scope of the call, is available at <https://www.wwtf.at> .

2.1. Research team and host institutions

The **Principal Investigator and Coordinator (PI)** of a WWTF project must be based at a Viennese home institution to which the project is affiliated. This includes researchers moving to Vienna who will have a Viennese affiliation and workplace in case of funding being granted. Project **partners** outside of Vienna may receive up to 20% of the total funding. Partners outside Vienna are optional.

For **universities**, WWTF projects are treated according to §27 of the Universities Act 2002. Therefore, authorizing signatures from the university or scientific institution acting as hosting institution are required for the submission of the proposal. In case of funding being granted, the host institution will be the formal contract partner for WWTF with the PI taking full scientific and financial responsibility.

2.2. Eligible costs

Please note that the full proposal requires a detailed project budget.

WWTF funding may be used for all project-related costs; however, the main focus should be funding scientific personnel. All persons employed through a WWTF-funded project should receive a fair contract with at least a minimum wage according to the “Kollektivvertrag” (collective agreement) of the Austrian Universities. For staff employed at non-university institutions, this minimum wage must adhere to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, available online). The maximum employment is set to 100%. When planning the budget, please use full-time equivalent (FTE) salaries and note that the PhD salary listed by FWF is for a 75% position.

Personnel costs cannot be claimed for permanent senior staff who are 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 may claim up to 20% of their annual salary from WWTF.

The personnel categories are:

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

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 software (as well as small devices up to € 1,500 each), **travelling costs** (incurred for attending project-related scientific events and meetings), **publication costs** (including costs for patent filing and open access publication), **workshops and conferences** and **other project-related costs**. However, non-personnel costs must be balanced, as WWTF focuses on funding people, and should not exceed the limit stated on the call fiche for non-personnel costs.

WWTF pays a **maximum of 20% overhead**. Overhead (“indirect costs”) is calculated as 20% of the direct costs (personnel + non-personnel costs) of the project. The total funding volume is calculated as direct + indirect costs. Applicants are required to comply with the overhead regulations of the host institutions.

2.3. Ethics and good scientific practice

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

- If approval from an ethics committee/institutional review board is required for the planned project, this must be clearly stated at the short proposal stage and the approval (“Votum”) **must be submitted online with the full proposal (PDF upload)**.
- Approval by an ethics committee must be specific for the submitted 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, the PI must include a statement (in the online Submission System) confirming that the approval covers the planned research.
- Should it not be possible to obtain a final approval before the full proposal deadline due to reasons beyond the control of the applicant (such as constraints imposed by the local ethics committee), the applicant must explain the reasons in the textbox provided in the Submission System. The preliminary approval must be sent to the call manager at the latest two months after the full proposal deadline.
- If the main applicant of the ethical approval is not the PI or a co-PI/Core-Team Member of the WWTF proposal, a clear statement must be included in the online proposal, in which 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 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. The proposal will not be further processed or sent for evaluation.

2.4. Open access policies

Please keep in consideration WWTF's open access policy [available online](#)¹.

2.5. Evaluation Process

Project calls follow a **two-stage evaluation process**. After evaluation of the short proposals, selected teams will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals may be submitted until the deadline via the online submission system. WWTF does not accept submissions after the deadline.

2.5.1. Formal eligibility check

After the submission deadline, all full proposals will be screened for their formal eligibility by the WWTF office to ensure that the following criteria are met:

- a. **Eligibility:** the principal investigator must be affiliated to a Viennese university or non-university research institution; the research institutions of the applicants must be eligible for this type of funding. For JPs, at least one co-PI must be affiliated to a Lower Austrian university or non-university research institution.
- b. Applicants may not appear in a key role (i.e. as PI, Co-PI/Core Team Member) in more than two proposals
- c. **Budget:** requested funding falls within the defined range; limits per cost category and region are not exceeded. Budget changes from the short proposal must be reasonable and explained.
- d. **Completeness:** all parts of the proposal are completed, including the required uploads. Missing information may lead to an exclusion of the proposal from the evaluation process.
- e. **Signatures:** all signatures for affirmations and authorizations have been provided. Electronic signatures are accepted.

Proposals that do not meet the formal requirements will not be sent to the jury panel for further evaluation. Applicants of proposals which are deemed ineligible will be informed shortly after the submission deadline.

2.5.2. Evaluation of full proposals

Full proposals are evaluated through both written reviews by international experts and a meeting of an expert jury panel in Vienna. Each proposal is assigned to at least two jury members and first undergoes written peer review by at least three international reviewers. At the jury panel meeting, all proposals will undergo a comprehensive evaluation based upon the written peer reviews and the jury members' own expertise. This will lead to each proposal receiving a recommendation "to be funded" or "not to be funded".

¹ <https://www.wwtf.at/about/guidlines/index.php?ID=7545#O7545>

2.5.3 Formal funding decision

The recommendations of the jury panel will be brought forward by the WWTF Advisory Board to the WWTF Board of Directors, who will make the formal funding decision. All applicants will be notified of the funding outcome shortly thereafter.

Applicants will also receive all anonymised written reviews, along with a summary of the discussion at the jury panel meeting.

2.6 Evaluation Criteria

Each eligible proposal will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- a. **Fit to call.** Does the proposed research fit to the thematic scope of the call “Chemical Biology”?
- b. **Scientific quality and excellence.** Is this project at the forefront of international research? Does it have potential to advance understanding of an important question in life science, biotechnology or human health?
- c. **Innovation and suitability of approaches.** Does the project draw upon innovative methodologies in pursuing its question? Are the approaches suitable for addressing this question?
- d. **Feasibility.** Is the timeframe sufficient for carrying out the project? Are the proposed resources suitable?
- e. **Quality and excellence of team.** Do team members show outstanding track record (according to “academic age”) and potential? Are the competencies of the team sufficient and complementary for the proposed work?
- f. **Consideration of gender aspects:** The relevance of potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects of the proposed projects should be considered and explained within the different sections of the short proposal. Please also refer to WWTF’s guidelines for sex and gender consideration [available online](https://www.wwtf.at/about/guidlines/index.php?lang=EN&ID=10379#O10379)².

² <https://www.wwtf.at/about/guidlines/index.php?lang=EN&ID=10379#O10379>

3. Online Submission System

3.1. Login and submission

WWTF only accepts submission of proposals via its electronic 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, 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 provided and uploaded (signalled by a green check mark next to the chapter title); Please be aware that no changes are possible after submission.

The submission system closes at 14:00 (CET) on the day of the deadline.

3.2 General information for the full proposal

Project proposals are assessed by international scientists outside of Austria. Thus, all proposals must be written in **English** (except the “General Description in German”). Please write precisely and address the required criteria, while also providing sufficient detail to allow an evaluation by international peers.

The information for the full proposal consists of a part that is written “offline” (to be uploaded as a PDF document), as well as information to be directly entered into the online Submission System.

3.3 Offline sections

- Some parts of the full proposal must be written offline with a word processing programme and allow the possibility of adding images, tables, etc. This document should then be uploaded as a single PDF file to the WWTF Submission System.
- Please download and use the **template** provided in the Submission System. The template includes the required headings for each section in bold. Subheadings and lengths of each section are provided as guidelines.
- You may use any word-processing software of your choice. However, please use a **common font type** (such as Arial) and a **font size of 11pt. Line spacing should be between 1.3 and 1.5**. The layout should support the readability of the proposal.
- Please **do not add any headers or footers** (such as page numbers, proposal number, title of proposal) since this information will be added automatically to the file upon upload of the PDF.
- You may include **figures, tables**, etc. to improve the scientific presentation. Please consider the resolution of figures, as the **size limit** for the proposal (excluding ethics) is **8 MB**.

- The length of this offline part of the full proposal **must not exceed 15 pages**. Please note that uploading a file greater than this length will not be permitted by the system.
- The full proposal should be an **extension of the short proposal** you have already submitted. Substantial changes of the project may impact the evaluation of the project by the jury.

3.4. Online sections

Please note that the title of research project, scientific disciplines, keywords and the key applicants (PI, Co-PI, and core team members) should be identical to those on the short proposal. No substitution, deletions or additions of core team members are allowed at this stage.

The online part has five sections:

1. **Project Summary**
2. **Research Project**
3. **Project Team**
4. **Project Budget**
5. **Affirmations and Authorization**

3.4.1 Project summary

Please note that all character limits include spaces.

- Project duration may be changed
- **Scientific abstract** (1,500 characters) in English will be the first information jury members and peer reviewers read. The abstract is automatically taken from the short proposal. You may change it as you see fit.
- **General description** (1,500 characters) in German language is mandatory and will be used by WWTF for public relations work in case of funding. It will not be provided to the jury and peer reviewers. Please provide a description that is suitable for the general public, rather than translating the scientific abstract into German.
- **Suggested peers** (for peer review): Applicants must suggest five international peers whom they deem qualified to review the proposal. To help enable the selection of a balanced set of reviewers, please provide up to five key words or phrases to describe the reviewers' fields of expertise. Suggested reviewers must be based outside of Austria and exhibit no conflict of interests with project applicants. Persons with whom the project applicants have worked together (publication activity, research cooperation, etc.) in the last five years will not be considered. Please note that the WWTF will determine if suggested peers will be contacted for reviewing.
- **Excluded peers** (for peer review) (optional): Applicants may, without stating any reasons, exclude up to three peers from reviewing their proposal. These names will not be visible to external peer reviewers.

3.4.2. Research Project (max. 15 pages including figures)

A Word Document template for this section is provided in the Submission System for download. Please address each main point in bold below. The page numbers serve as a guide for the lengths of each section, although some flexibility is permitted to allow for more precise presentation of the project. Upload the completed document as a **PDF**.

1. **Introduction** (3 pages)
 - a. Subject of the research
 - b. State of the art and key scientific challenges
2. **Hypotheses, objectives and expected outcomes** (2 pages)
 - a. Research questions and hypotheses
 - b. Objectives and expected results of the project
3. **Innovativeness and impact** (1-2 pages)
 - a. Innovativeness of the proposed research
 - b. Fit, contribution and relevance of the work to the field of Chemical Biology
4. **Methodological approach** (5-6 pages)
 - a. Research methods
 - b. Research plan (including Gantt chart)
 - c. Feasibility, risk management and mitigation strategies
 - d. Preliminary data related to proposal
5. **Personnel** (1 page)
 - a. Justification and roles of personnel
 - b. Project management

Please note that the roles and competencies of the core team members are also to be described in Section 3 of the online form.

6. **Key references** (1.5 pages)

Every citation within the research proposal should be referenced, and every reference should be linked to a citation within the proposal. Highlight in bold a maximum of 10 key publications that represent the state of the art in the relevant research area(s).

Potential ethical aspects (750 characters)


Indicate if the approval of an ethics committee or institutional review board is required. If so, please describe the potential ethical aspects and upload the ethical approval(s) as a single PDF. There is no page limit for the approvals, but the document may not exceed 5MB. This document is only for internal use and will not be sent to the jury panel or the peer reviewers.

3.4.3. Project Team


Key information about the core team members has been transferred from the short proposal and cannot be changed or deleted at this stage.

- Please specify the roles and responsibilities of each core team member (750 characters), as well as their competencies (750 characters) with respect to the project

- CV may be updated (use of the provided template remains mandatory)
- Additional persons beyond the core team may be added. This will be relevant for calculating the project budget. Placeholders for future team members can be added by selecting “N.N.” from the “Title” dropdown box. Multiple N.N.s should be numbered in the “Last name” 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 * | -- please select -- | | |

 add Additional person

To add an additional person from an institution other than those of the core team members, please first add an additional “Partner Institution”. A maximum of six institutions in total (including the institutions of the core team members) may be entered. Any changes in the additional partner institutions from the short proposal stage should be explained in relevant section of the proposal (explanation of cost planning, etc.)

Partner Institution 3 

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| 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"/> | please choose  |

- **Project team composition & gender equality** (750 characters): Describe how gender equality/balance in team composition and project execution has been addressed (e.g., in job announcements, staff recruitment, working environment)
- Do working conditions allow all members of staff to combine work and family life? Are there mechanisms in place to manage and monitor gender equality, e.g. workforce statistics? Are team members trained for gender competences in research and leadership?
- **Career development prospects and potential to secure additional funding** (750 characters): Describe how the project contributes to the career development of the team members (e.g., providing opportunities for research, staff exchange, teaching and mentoring). Also, describe how funding from this programme will enable the applicants to secure additional/follow-up funding (e.g., Austrian funding agencies, Horizon Europe).

3.4.4. Project Budget

The budget in the Full Proposal should not differ significantly from the budget outline submitted in the Short Proposal. In case of major differences, justification is required under “Explanation of Cost Planning” (see below).

Table 1: Planning of personnel costs

- Fill out the table for all involved persons over the project duration. The names and staff category of all persons listed in section “3. Project Team” are automatically transferred. Please first choose the “Funding source” (WWTF, in-kind, in-kind & WWTF) and then specify the average yearly time commitment for each year of the project. For persons for whom WWTF funding is requested, enter the salary that corresponds to a 100% employment in the first year. The total funding for each person will then be automatically calculated, including a 3% annual salary increase.
- Please note that the PhD salary listed by the FWF is for a 75% or a 30 hours position, and adjust the time commitment/salary accordingly to ensure PhD students receive at least the recommended annual salary
- Salaries are in k € = 1.000 Euro

Table 2: Planning of project related costs for equipment, materials, travelling, publications, organization of workshops/ conferences/ ..., and other costs

- Please provide a concise description of all non-personnel costs directly related to the project. Costs for basic infrastructure (rent, telephone, shared equipment) are not permitted.
- WWTF encourages open access publications. Costs for Article Process Charges (APCs) may be listed in this table.
- As WWTF aims to fund scientific personnel, the share of non-personnel costs should not exceed **40%** of the total budget.

Table 3: Total funding applied for per institution

- The direct personnel and non-personnel costs for each institution are automatically transferred from Tables 1 and 2.
- Insert the overhead percentage (i.e. indirect costs) for each institution as an integer between 0% (no overheads claimed) and **20%** (maximum overheads permitted by WWTF). Please observe the guidelines for overhead costs for each institution.
- An overview of the total funding from the WWTF per institution will be displayed

Table 4: Budget per region

- Using information from the above tables, this table provides an overview of the budget allocated to each region
- For regular WWTF Projects, the table shows costs allocated to “Vienna” and “Other”. 20% of the budget may go to regions outside Vienna.
- For Joint Projects, the table shows cost allocations to “Vienna”, “Lower Austria” and “Other”. The budget allocation to the region “Vienna” must be at least 51%. The share of the budget allocated to the region “Lower Austria” may range between 21 – 49%. Up to 20% may be allocated to partner(s) in other regions.

Explanation of Cost Planning (3,000 characters)

Please provide an explanation of cost planning principles and detailed calculations of personnel and non-personnel costs. Please note that personnel costs should comprise the major part of project-related costs.

Disclosure of other applications for funding (750 characters)

If you have applied for funding for this project (or parts thereof) at other organisations, please indicate this here. This will not impact your evaluation. In the case of funding, you will be asked by which institute you wish to be funded.

3.4.5. Affirmations and Authorization

Affirmations are the signatures of the core project team members. Additionally, WWTF requires the signatures of the authorized person(s) at all institutes to which persons signing the “Affirmations” are affiliated.

- Please add the names of the authorized persons for each hosting institution

| Institution | Signing person | Date, stamp, signature |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| University/Research Institute 1 | <input type="text"/> | * |
| University/Research Institute 2 | <input type="text"/> | * |
| University/Research Institute 3 | <input type="text"/> | * |

- Download the resulting form from the bottom of the page (“Download Part II/5 as PDF document”). Collect the signatures, together with date and stamp (if applicable). WWTF accepts electronic signatures.
- Multiple copies of the forms may be used for signing. If multiple signatures are required from one institution, you can either download the same form multiple times or add the additional signatures on the same page.
- Additional institutions must also sign the “Authorizations” section for the submission of the full proposal.
- Please upload one PDF containing all required signatures. Up to nine pages in a single PDF are permitted.
- Please do not send hard copies of signed sheets to WWTF

4. In Case of Funding

The **formal funding contract** will be signed between WWTF and the hosting institution of the Principal Investigator (for universities according to §27 of the Universities Act 2002). The PI has full scientific and financial responsibility. Projects may start immediately but **no later than 6 months** after the formal funding decision has been made by the WWTF Board of Directors. During the project duration WWTF pays funding rates once a year in advance to the PI's hosting institution. The PI is then responsible for the distribution of funds to the partner institutions (if applicable).

WWTF monitoring during the runtime of the projects includes annual online reports delivered by the PI to WWTF. This should contain an overview on the scientific results achieved, personnel employed, and funding spent, as well as project outputs. WWTF office also undertakes site-visits to learn about the progress of the project and the 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.

For further details, please refer to WWTF's reporting guidelines [available online](#)³.

³ <https://www.wwtf.at/about/guidlines/index.php?lang=DE&ID=10241#O10241>