WWTF
WIENER WISSENSCHAFTS-, FORSCHUNGS- UND TECHNOLOGIEFONDS

Guide for Writing a Full Proposal
Cognitive Sciences Call 2015

June 2015

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 ("Science Chairs", "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*" from which WWTF receives about seven to nine million € annually.

In addition, WWTF runs the following funding programmes for the City of Vienna: The "University Infrastructure Programme" (*2006), "Social Sciences and Humanities in Vienna" (*2008), "Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators" (*2010) with a total annual funding volume of about four to five million €.

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 established. Additionally, for each proposal written peer reviews are obtained internationally. During a two-day meeting in Vienna the juries formulate a funding recommendation based on the reviews and on their own expertise. This recommendation is then formally accepted by the WWTF Board of Directors.

The governing body is the WWTF Board of Directors. It is complemented by the WWTF Advisory Board composed of Viennese scientists and representatives from the areas of economics, society and politics. WWTF office manages all funding activities and is the contact point for all applicants and funded persons.

Important Issues

The **Call Fiche** including contact information of the WWTF call managers is available at www.wwtf.at. The formal criteria for a WWTF CS 2015 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 Mio. € are dedicated to his call.

The **Principal Investigator (PI)** of a WWTF project must have a Viennese home institution to which the project is affiliated to. 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 "Universitätsgesetz 2002". Therefore, authorized signatures from the university / scientific institution acting as home institution are mandatory for submission. In case of funding, the 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) standards available online at http://www.fwf.ac.at/de/forschungsfoerderung/personalkostensaetze/. A *maximum total employment* is set at 100%. 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 by own scientific events), and **other project related costs**. However, non-personnel cost must be balanced, as WWTF focuses on funding people.

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. 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 strings attached. Kindly attend to the overhead regulations of the involved institutions.

Compliance with the rules for good scientific practice is mandatory even at the proposal stage.

Funding Criteria

This WWTF call aims to support teams of scientists that would like to conduct multi-annual innovative interdisciplinary scientific research projects in the field of Cognitive Sciences.

The key selection criterion for this call is **scientific quality**, i.e., both the applicants and the submitted project must be scientifically outstanding. Proposals must **bring together scientists from two to three different research disciplines** to 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**. WWTF provides funding for scientific research projects which should

- include empirical data (i.e. purely theoretical approaches will be excluded),
- improve the understanding of current substantial research questions in the Cognitive Sciences and thus demonstrate how the proposed work advances the Cognitive Sciences as a field. Researchers that investigate from an interdisciplinary approach the neural substrate underlying cognition and behaviour are encouraged to submit a proposal,
- be characterized by a well-defined scientific research plan that includes clearly identified research questions, specified 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.

Young and female scientists are especially encouraged to apply and to act as Principal Investigators.

Evaluation Process

In this call a **two-stage submission process** is applied. Full proposals have to be submitted upon invitation by **August 20, 2015, 2pm**.

Evaluation procedure in detail:

The evaluation of full proposals is carried out through a combination of remote assessment by international reviewers and a panel meeting of international experts in Vienna. **Two jury members** are assigned to each proposal which at first undergoes **written peer review** by at least three international reviewers. The content of the full proposal must be consistent and in

accordance with the successful short proposal, extending it by providing full details about the approach, state of the art, etc.

Jury meeting (end of November) in Vienna: At this meeting, the funding recommendation to the WWTF Board of Directors will be made. It includes the 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.

The formal funding decision (confirmation of jury recommendation) will be made by WWTF Board of Directors in December 2015.

Applicants 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 your short 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 provided information.**
4. **Submit proposal**: the submit button becomes active only after all requested information has been filled in and uploaded; **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 full proposal has a size limit of maximum 5 MB.

Required Structure of a WWTF Full Proposal

Applications to WWTF undergo an assessment by international scientists, thus all proposals must be written in **English**. Please write precisely and to the point but go into enough detail to allow an evaluation by international peers!

The information for the full proposal consists of a part that is written "offline" with a word processors as well as information that need to be added directly in the online submission system.

1. **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.
   - 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**.

- Please do **not add any header or footer** (such as page numbers, proposal number, title of proposal) in the word processing file since this information will be added automatically upon upload of the PDF generated by the word processing programme.
- You **may include figures, tables**, etc. to improve the scientific presentation. Please note that the size limit for the overall proposal is 5 MB, thus, think of the appropriate resolution/file size of the figures.
- The length of the offline part of the **full proposal must not exceed 14 pages** maximum. Please note that the system refuses upload if this number is exceeded.
- Keep 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.

2. **Online part** of the proposal:
- Note that the title of 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!

1. Project Summary (online form)

- **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.
- **General description** (**max. 1.200 characters**) in German language is mandatory and will be used by WWTF for public relations work (such as WWTF webpage) in case of funding but will not be visible in the final electronic proposal and print-out (for jury and peer reviewers). We ask you to use a public style abstract and not simply translate the scientific abstract into German.
- **Scientific abstract** in English (**max. 1.500 characters**) will be the first information jury members and peer reviewers read.
- **Excluded peers** (for peer review) (optional, max. 3): Applicants may exclude up to three peers from reviewing your proposal without indicating any reasons. The names will be stored in the WWTF database and will not be visible in the electronic proposal and 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.
- **Suggested peers** (for peer review): Applicants must suggest three international peers from a field of competence that enables them to review the proposal. No previous publication activity or research cooperation with the suggested reviewer should be evident. Please provide up to five keywords or phrases that describe the reviewers' fields of competence to enable a balanced set of reviewers to be chosen.

2. Research Project (max. 14 pages, PDF upload) (template is provided)

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

- Project **description** (about 4 pages)
  - **Subject of the research**
  - **State of the art and key scientific challenges: Please consider here also the interdisciplinary aspects of your project.**
  - **Hypotheses and research questions**

- **Objectives and expected outcomes** (about 1 page)
  - **Objectives of the project**
  - **Expected results and outcomes:** should include also a concise dissemination strategy of your project

- **Innovativeness and relevance** (about 2 pages)
  - **Contribution and relevance** of the work to the cognitive sciences: Describe the scientific relevance and contribution of the proposed work for the field of cognitive sciences and the timeliness of the research.
  - **Innovative aspects of the proposal:** What are the innovative aspects of the project? *Optional: is there a societal/economical (mid-term) relevance implicated?*
  - **Interdisciplinarity:** Why is an interdisciplinary approach needed to answer the research questions? What are the benefits of such an approach? How did the idea of the interdisciplinary project arise? What measures will be taken to ensure the collaboration across disciplines?

- **Methodological approach** (about 4 pages)
  - **Methodology and research plan:** By which methods do you aim to reach the objectives of the project? Justify the choice of the empirical data you use (including a rationale for the selection of the research subjects). What does each involved discipline contribute in terms of methods? Include a research plan that demonstrates the process of your work.
  - **Feasibility and risk management:** Provide a short assessment of the feasibility of your approach. What are potential risky aspects in your research and how do you deal with it, if results fail to realize? If applicable: describe how you get access to research subjects and other essential but not easily available means of research (e.g. imaging facilities).
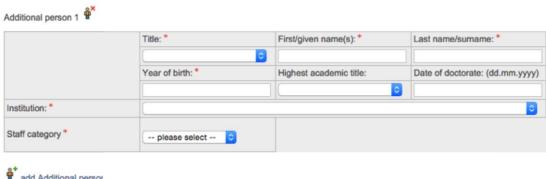
- o **Potential ethical aspects:** What potential ethical aspects are touched by your research?

- **Roles of personnel** (about 1,5 page)
  - o **Roles and competences of key researchers** in the project: including information how each researcher contributes to the interdisciplinary nature of the project
  - o **Project management**
  - o **Research environment:** Please concisely describe in what research environment (group, department, network …) the project will be immediately embedded.

- **Key references** (about 1,5 pages): Please focus in the most relevant literature. Every citation must have a reference. Every reference must refer to a citation in the text. Use a reference style common in your field. Highlight (e.g. in bold face) a maximum of ten key publications representing the state of the art in the respective research area(s).

Online form

- Confirmation if an **approval of an ethics committee / institutional review board** is required or not. If yes, confirm that necessary permits will be obtained.
- Upload Template "Research Project"

3. Project Team (online form)

- Persons and their roles filled into the system for the short proposals (PI, Co-PI, core team members) cannot be changed or deleted.
- Further persons with no "key role" (all but PI, Co-Pi, core team members) can be added. This is relevant to calculate the project budget.

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

- **Gender Management Policy** (max. 750 characters): Please describe how your project deals with gender equality issues during job announcements, recruitment of staff and working environment.
- **Plans for Human Resources Development** (max. 750 characters): 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).

4. Project Budget (online form)

- **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% overhead (i.e., „indirect costs"). Thus WWTF requires an explanation of your cost planning principles and a detailed planning of personnel costs (which should comprise the major part of the project related costs) as well as planning of project related costs for equipment, materials, travelling, publications, organization of workshops/ conferences/ … and other project related costs. For cost planning an „WWTF Cost Planning Tool" (Excel file) is available, however, only the numbers provided in Tables 1, 2, and 3 in the submission system will be considered as requested WWTF funding. Please do not upload the excel file. Costs are calculated in **thousands of Euro (with one decimal position only)**, e.g. 305,6 k Euro = 305.600 Euro.
- **Planning of personnel costs** (table 1) includes the names and staff category of all persons listed in part „3. Project Team" are automatically filled. Please first choose the funding source (WWTF, in-kind, WWTF & in-kind) and then add the average yearly time commitment for each project year. Finally, for those persons where WWTF funding is requested, fill in the salary corresponding to a 100% employment in the first project year. The total funding applied for each person will then automatically be colculated including a 3% annual salary increase. At the end of Table 1 you will see the total personnel costs applied for from WWTF.
- **Planning of non-personnel costs** (table 2, project related costs for equipment, materials, travelling, publications, organization of workshops/ conferences/ …, and other costs) shall include a concise description of costs per cost category/ institution as well as the funding applied for.
- **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 a numeric value between 0.0 (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. Note: Minimum funding volume is 200,000 €, the upper limit is 600.000 €.
- You are also asked to tick a checkbox that you are aware of the **overhead policy** of your institution.

- 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.

All signatures are required only on the proposal print-out. Multiple copies of the respective pages might be used for signing. Faxed or scanned and printed pages are accepted.

Note: Hard copy versions of the submission must be handed in to WWTF office, Schlickgasse 3, 1090 Wien until August 20, 2015, 2pm. Hard copies (including all signatures) via mail service are allowed – post stamp counts and is accepted up to August 20, 2015. Electronic versions only are not regarded as complete submissions.

6. Appendix

There is the *option* to update the individual CV files, e.g. either to include recent developments. Please note, that the overall framework for the CV remains the same with regard to the short proposal phase (two page limit):

The "Biographical Sketch" should consist of a one-page CV and a one-page List of Publications (limited to a maximum of ten publications).

A Biographical Sketch must contain the following information:

(i) Higher education including obtained degrees and dates when received

(ii) Appointments

A list, in reverse chronological order, of all the individual´s academic/professional appointments or other work experience.

(iii) Funded projects

A list of up to three funded projects with their running time, funding source, funding sum and the role played in each project.

(iv) Other relevant activities/ experience

A list that demonstrates the broader impact of the individual's professional and scholarly activities that focuses on the creation, integration, and transfer of knowledge.

List of Publications:

A list of up to ten peer-reviewed publications published over the last five years. Mark with an asterisk (*) those publications most relevant to the proposed research.

In Case of Funding

The **Formal Funding Contract** will be made 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 **not 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 distribution to the partner institutions (if applicable).

WWTF monitoring during the runtime of 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 adopt 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.

Changes to the document:

21.07.2015: p.5. last paragraph: between 1.3 and 1.5 ~~pt~~.