WWTF
WIENER WISSENSCHAFTS-, FORSCHUNGS- UND TECHNOLOGIEFONDS

Guide for Writing a Short Proposal

"Environmental Systems Research: Urban Environments" Pilot Call 2017

September 2016

About WWTF

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

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

Currently, WWTF runs the following thematic programmes: "Life Sciences" (*2003), "Mathematics *and* ..." (*2004), "Information and Communication Technology" (*2008), and "Cognitive Sciences" (*2011). "Environmental Systems Research: Urban Environments" is a pilot call to explore a potential new thematic programme. The financial resources of WWTF originate from the "*Privatstiftung zur Verwaltung von Anteilsrechten*" from which WWTF receives about nine million € annually.

In addition, WWTF runs funding programmes on behalf of the City of Vienna.

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 a number of written peer reviews are obtained. During a 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 economy, 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** with all necessary details including contact information of WWTF call managers is available at www.wwtf.at. The formal criteria for a WWTF "Environmental Systems Research: Urban Environments" 2017 project include a minimum funding volume of 200.000 € with an upper range of up to 650.000 € and a planned duration of 2-4 years. In total, 4 Mio. € are dedicated to this pilot call in the field of "Environmental Systems Research: Urban Environments".

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. The budget for non-personnel costs is limited to max. 25% of overall WWTF funding. Everybody employed in a WWTF-funded project should get a fair contract with at least a *minimum wage* according to the "Kollektivvertrag" (collective agreement) of the Austrian Universities or – for staff employed at non-university institutions – according to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) available online at www.fwf.ac.at/de/forschungsfoerderung/personalkostensaetze. A *maximum total employment* is set at 100% (e.g. senior employed personnel that are fully employed cannot ask for additional funding of their own salary). 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**. The budget for non-personnel costs is limited to max. 25% of overall WWTF funding, 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 stick to the overhead regulations of the involved institutions.

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

Please also consider WWTF's open access policy.[1]

Funding Criteria

This WWTF call aims to support teams of scientists that want to conduct a cutting-edge research project in the field of environmental systems research over several years with a major focus on urban environments.

The key selection criterion for this call is **scientific quality**, i.e., both the applicant and the submitted project must be scientifically outstanding. The **innovative aspects** of a project as was well as its **prospective medium term benefits** are major criterions in the review of the proposals. Proposals must be interdisciplinary in nature and should tackle societal highly relevant questions in the field of urban environments and bring together researchers from different scientific disciplines in order to foster interactive partnerships across Vienna. Partnerships across facilities and institutions in Vienna are highly welcome.

Please note that a researcher can appear in a **key role** (that is, as PI, Co-PI or Core Team Member) **in two proposals at most**.

Eligible are researchers at Viennese universities and non-university research institutions including researchers moving to Vienna as a result of this 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 used: At first, a short proposal (character limits are defined in the online submission system) shall be submitted describing the key objectives and motivation for the proposed work. Second, the applicants of successful short proposals are invited to submit a full proposal. Short proposals may be submitted at any time from the opening of the call until the final closure date (**19-Jan-2017, 2pm**). Full proposals have to be submitted upon invitation by **18-May-2017, 2pm**.

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[1] See http://wwtf.at/upload/WWTF_Open_Access_Policy_EN.pdf

Evaluation procedure in detail:

1. Formal eligibility check by WWTF: Initially the proposals will be screened for formal eligibility by the WWTF office based on the following criteria: Principal Investigator is affiliated to a Viennese research institution | duly submitted | funding range between 200.000 € and 650.000 € | required signatures | all necessary parts filled in | length of the proposal not exceeded | not more than two key roles in different proposals. **Proposals that do not meet the key requirements outlined will not be sent for further evaluation to the core jury.** Applicants of proposals which are deemed ineligible will be informed shortly after the submission deadline.

2. Evaluation of short proposals: If the proposal is not rejected for formal reasons it will be evaluated through a core team of the jury (core jury). Each proposal will be assessed independently by several jury members based on the following criteria: **quality** (scientific originality and excellence of the proposed research project), **innovative character** (Which aspects of the proposed project are especially innovative?), **fit to call** (urban problems / interdisciplinarity / …), **societal relevance** (What are the prospective benefits for whom and when are they expected?), **potential of the applicant** (accomplishments and potential of the applicants to conduct the research). Non-successful applicants will be promptly informed about rejections and will be provided with a short jury statement explaining the decision.

3. Evaluation of full proposals: If the short proposal fulfils the requirements, the applicants are invited to submit a **full proposal** by **18-May-2017**. The objectives of the full proposal must be consistent and in accordance with the successful short proposal, extending it by providing full details about the approach, the specific work plan etc. Full proposals should not exceed the size limits indicated in the submission system. A guide for writing the full proposal will be provided in due time. The evaluation of full proposals is carried out through a combination of remote assessment by international peers, i.e. **written peer review** by at least three international reviewers and by a jury of international experts that convene in Vienna. In the latter case, the core jury is extended by additional renowned scientists. At least **two jury members** are assigned to each proposal.

4. Jury meeting in Vienna in mid September 2017: This is the most significant step in the assessment. There will be a comprehensive evaluation of all proposals on basis of written peer reviews and the jury's own expertise resulting in a recommendation "to be funded" or "not to be funded" for each proposal.

5. Formal funding decision (confirmation of jury recommendation) by WWTF Board of Directors.

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

How to use WWTF's Online Submission System

1. Go to https://funding.wwtf.at
2. **Register** with your e-mail address and name: password will be sent to you by e-mail. If you submitted in a former call, you can use your old login data
3. **Log in**, choose the call, and create a new proposal
4. **Short 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!
5. **Submit proposal**: The submit button becomes active only after all requested infor-mation has been filled in and uploaded (signalled by a green check mark next to the chapter title); Please be aware that after submission no changes are possible any-more!

   Note: The submission system closes at 2 pm on the day of the deadline. The short proposal has a size limit of maximum 5 MB. No diagrams or pictures are allowed at this stage.

Required Structure of a WWTF Short Proposal

Applications to WWTF undergo an assessment by international scientists, thus all proposals must be written in **English**. The length of the short proposal is determined by character counts and upload limitations in the online submission system (about 5-6 A4 pages). Please write concisely and to the point but go into enough detail to allow an evaluation by interna-tional peers!

A short proposal to WWTF comprises of the following parts and has to be filled in into the online forms:

I. Basic Information

It includes the *Title** of the project, *Keywords** and *Disciplines*.* Furthermore, the **indica-tive project duration** (between 2 and 4 years) as well as the **indicative budget** (approxi-mate within the range of 200.000 - 650.000 Euros) has to be stated. In the case of an invita-tion to write a full proposal, there should not be any significant changes in the budget in comparison to the short proposal. Exceptions are ok but need an explanation.

Note: All items marked with a * cannot be changed after the short proposal stage!

II. Project Summary (up to 1.500 characters)

This part must provide a concise project summary including all relevant aspects of the proposal.

III. Content of research project

a. Outline of research project: state of the art, innovativeness, key hypothesis, research questions and key challenges (up to 4.300 characters)

What is the state of the art of the proposed research? What are the innovative aspects of the project? How does it differ from the ongoing research activities of the team members? What are the key hypothesis, research questions and the scientific challenges the project wants to address? Provide an outline of the research project.

b. Objectives and outcomes (up to 1.250 characters)

What are the milestones you plan to reach and in which runtimes? Illustrate what the prospective benefits of your project are and when they are to be expected.

c. Research methods (up to 2.000 characters)

By which methods do you aim to reach the objectives of the project? Why is an interdisciplinary approach needed for the research question? What does each involved discipline contribute in terms of methods? Include a short assessment on the feasibility of the approach.

d. Fit to the call theme and societal relevance (up to 1.500 characters)

Describe the fit of the proposed work for the call theme of "Environmental Systems Research: Urban Environments" (system perspective, urban environments). Also outline what the relation to urban problems is and which socially relevant questions you want to answer.

e. Role of involved persons and implementation of interdisciplinary collaboration (up to 1.500 characters)

How did the idea of the interdisciplinary collaboration arise? What are the roles of the participating key researchers in the project? What measures will be taken to ensure the collaboration across disciplines?

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f. Key References (around 8, up to 1.250 characters)

Cite the most relevant background literature.

g. Potential ethical aspects (up to 400 characters)

Please state potential ethical aspects and how you will deal with them.

IV. Principal Investigator

Name and *full contact information* of the **Principal Investigator** (PI) including the home insti-tution where the PI intends to run the project is required. Typically, this information must also be provided for the Co-PI, representing another discipline. However, the PI is the main con-tact and sole responsible person to WWTF. Furthermore, the names and institutions of the *Core Project Team* members must be stated. Altogether, **not more than three individuals** (including the PI) can be stated in this section.

V. Affirmations and Authorization

Affirmations are the signatures of the core project team members (max. three). Additionally, WWTF requires collecting the signatures of the authorized person(s) of all participating insti-tutions to which the persons signing the "Authorization" are affiliated in case of funding.

Multiple copies might be used for signing. Scanned pages are accepted. **Please upload one PDF containing all the required signatures!**

In the short proposal stage, no hard-copy print-out version is required!

VI. Appendix

In the appendix please upload a "Biographical Sketch" (limited to a maximum of **two pages**) for the PI, Co-PI if applicable, and core team members. 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:

- Higher education including obtained degrees and dates when received
- Appointments: A list, in reverse chronological order, of all the individual´s academ-ic/professional appointments or other work experience.
- 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.
- Other relevant activities/ experience: A list that demonstrates the broader impact of the individual's professional and scholarly activities that focuses on the creation, inte-gration, 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 should **not start later than 6 months** after the formal funding decision has been made. During the project duration WWTF pays funding rates half a year in advance to the PI's Home Institution. The PI is then responsible for 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.