

Mailing of the FWF Executive Board to all currently funded FWF principal investigators
Vienna, 26 March 2020

Subject: Flexible solutions for researchers – We are here for you

Dear researchers,

In the current phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, we hope that you, your family and your teams are safe and healthy.

The COVID-19 crisis has also placed cutting-edge research in an exceptional situation: on the one hand, many colleagues are currently conducting intensive research und playing a key role in dealing with the crisis. At the same time, the federal government's emergency measures have severely limited the ability to plan and implement projects.

We at the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) are striving to come up with flexible solutions to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis as best as possible. At the same time, we are attempting through the introduction of urgent funding to initiate new research projects into existential crises.

You can find detailed information on all the FWF's actions online at www.fwf.ac.at/corona.

Here is a short overview:

- **Changes to the submission process**
 - The **submission deadlines** for ongoing calls have been extended. Please consult the [online information](#) or contact the respective programme managers or project officers.
 - Currently, we are accepting scanned **signatures**. The original signatures can be submitted at a later point in time but no later than at the time of the decision on approval by the FWF (before the respective meeting of the FWF Board). Alternatively, we are also accepting digital signatures; in this case, no further submission of signatures is required.

- **Policy on costs**
 - **Personnel costs** for persons who can prove that they are unable to continue to work on their research project due to the government's current measures can be paid using FWF funds as part of the existing funding agreements. In the case of extending the employment of staff or positions as grant-salaried principal investigators, please also contact the human resources department of your research institution in order to avoid any problems (for instance, in terms of the regulation on successive fixed-term contracts of employment).
 - Funding can be requested for non-reimbursed **costs** for cancelled project-specific travel. The principal investigator is responsible for providing the appropriate documentation including all receipts. Within the global budget, a flexible use of funds is ensured in any case.

- **Policy on project delays**
 - If it is already evident that the progress of the project will be delayed, the FWF can extend the project on a cost-neutral basis as always. A project **can now be extended in a cost neutral way up to 18 months** instead of the previous 12 months if the FWF is notified of this in a timely manner (in any case, before the period stated in the agreement expires). This applies for all FWF projects that are ongoing as of 31 March 2020.
 - In urgent cases in which the ongoing research project cannot be continued in the long term and its realisation is jeopardised, please get in contact with the respective project officer by e-mail and inform him or her of the potentially greater amount of financial support and/or time needed. We will take financially relevant measures within the limits of our resources to find good solutions in the interests of research. In particular, we will try to propose quick solutions for doctoral students and Schrödinger Fellows in cases of hardship.

- **Policy on travel bans or return trips in the mobility programmes**
 - We would ask all affected fellows to get in contact directly with their project officers in order to be able to offer solutions based on their individual situations.
 - The FWF is planning to respond in an uncomplicated and generous way to delayed project starts as well as cost-neutral extensions and project interruptions.

- **COVID-19-related funding opportunities**
 - We are inviting researchers from all disciplines to submit new research project proposals that contribute to research into humanitarian crises such as epidemics and pandemics as part of the new **urgent funding** in the FWF's existing programmes. More information on this will be available shortly [here](#).
 - Currently, the **FFG** has also launched a special **emergency call**—you can find all the relevant information [here](#).

We will continue to follow the developments closely and will take further action as appropriate. You can find all the latest information and our detailed COVID-19 FAQ online at www.fwf.ac.at/corona.

We wish you, your family and your teams all the best—and stay healthy!

Yours sincerely,

Klement Tockner, Artemis Vakianis, Gerlinde Mautner, Gregor Weihs, Ellen Zechner
Executive Board of the Austrian Science Fund FWF