ICT26 - Digital Humanism

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ICT26 Digital Humanism / Key Facts

> This call is open to research projects in the area of Digital Humanism as interdisciplinary cooperation between SSH and ICT.

Scope of the Call

This call invites researchers from ICT and SSH to submit an interdisciplinary proposal in the field of Digital Humanism. Through cooperation between ICT and SSH researchers, projects should draw upon knowledge and insights from SSH to lay scientific foundations for digital technologies & practices that are more socially robust and promote human values. The call is open to all research topics in the area of digital technologies & practices. Proposals that aim for theoretical and conceptual contributions to Digital Humanism are particularly welcome.

Who can apply?

- An interdisciplinary team of 2-3 researchers encompassing both ICT and SSH as Principal Investigators.
- The coordinating PI (PI&C) must be based at a university or research institute in Vienna.
- Co-PIs may be based outside of Vienna (funding limited to 20% of total budget).
- Co-PIs with an affiliation to an institution in Lower Austria may apply for up to 49% of the overall budget (Joint Project).

Project Duration

24-48 months

Funding

- Call budget: € 5 million.
- Project budget: € 350,000 to € 700.000 (Joint Projects up to € 750.000).
- Personnel and non-personnel costs may be claimed.
- Maximum 30% non-personnel costs.
- Up to 20% overhead costs may be claimed.

Timeline

- Call opening: January 19, 2026.
- Short Proposal deadline: April 15, 2026, 2pm CET. The decision will be communicated on May 28th.
  - 24 Proposals are invited for submitting a full proposal.
- Info-Session (invited only) on July 7, 10-12. **ICT26_InfoSession_full proposal.pdf**
- **Full Proposal deadline: July 30, 2026, 2pm CET**
- Communication of the decision: December 17, 2026.
- Project start: latest June 2027.

Process

- Two-stage selection process
- International jury
- International peer review
- Application via WWTF Funding Portal

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Call Specifications

This repository contains all the necessary information for the ICT26 Digital Humanism Project Call.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Scope of the Call

> This call is open to research projects in the area of Digital Humanism as interdisciplinary cooperation between SSH and ICT.

Digital Humanism

This call is issued within WWTF's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Programme. It invites research teams to submit proposals that engage with digital technologies and digital practices from the perspective of Digital Humanism. Digital technologies and practices exert enormous transformative forces on our society—including many that are considered positive, but also many that question the very foundations of our society—in particular, human rights and liberal democratic orders.

Rather than rejecting digital technologies in principle or accepting them in a techno-deterministic fashion, Digital Humanism takes a constructive stance. It considers the ability of humans and societies to actively shape technological developments, while also taking into account that we (our behaviours and values) are, in turn, shaped by technologies, since they incorporate implicit and explicit values and interests.

Digital Humanism as a field of research brings together researchers from ICT and the social sciences and humanities (SSH, including artistic research). With knowledge and insights from SSH, ICT research can lay the foundations for digital technologies and practices that are more socially robust and promote human values. In this way, Digital Humanism can contribute to more inclusive and sustainable technological development and support democratic values.

To ensure the scientifically robust integration of human and societal aspects into digital technologies and practices, collaboration between ICT and disciplines from the wide spectrum of SSH is central to Digital Humanism research.

Please also consider the following aspects:

- This call is open to research on **all topics of digital technologies and practices**. Research on topics not well represented in the Vienna research community (e.g., the economics of platforms) is particularly encouraged to apply in this call. Applicants must demonstrate the relevance of the proposed research to the progress and pursuit of democratic societies and the promotion of human values.

- The proposed projects should strongly reflect the ideas and principles of Digital Humanism and thus **bring together social and technological progress on a level playing field** .
- Projects should aim for a comprehensive understanding of digital technologies and practices **based on insights from both ICT sciences and SSH**.
- Projects may place varying emphases on methods development, theoretical and conceptual work, or the addressing of real-world cases. However, all proposed projects should **improve understanding of current fundamental questions regarding the social and human aspects of digital technologies and practices**, and thus contribute to the rethinking of existing developments in digital technologies and practices.
- Applicants are especially **invited to make theoretical contributions** that expand Digital Humanism as a conceptual space within which a wider range of digital technologies and practices can be understood. The focus of the theoretical contributions may either be in the ICT fields or in the SSH fields. However, based on the call's intention to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, both fields should be represented in developing theoretical approaches.
- Because Digital Humanism often cannot rely on an established set of methods to engage with research questions in an interdisciplinary way, applicants are encouraged to dedicate time and resources to the development of these methods.
- Projects in the area of digital humanities/computational social sciences, i.e., the prevalent use of computational methods to research questions in the SSH, are not within the scope of this call.
- The development of new applications and tools to pursue the idea of Digital Humanism is possible within the project. However, they should be regarded as a means to address fundamental research questions of Digital Humanism and thus not be the main output of the project.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

A central focus of this call, and of Digital Humanism in general, is to promote collaboration between ICT-related researchers and SSH. Researchers from both ICT-related fields and SSH (including art-based research) should therefore collaborate across disciplines. This should be reflected accordingly in the team composition. Both areas should contribute to the project in a substantial way, although one area may assume a larger role in the project if justified by the specific topic of the project.

Plans for collaboration between ICT and SSH areas must be demonstrated throughout all critical stages of the project, from the formulation of the research question and empirical research to the production of the project's output. Applicants are required to explicitly address communication and joint work plans among collaborators in the proposal.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Structure of the Call

> This call follows a two-stage selection process, consisting of a short proposal and full proposal phase.

- **Short proposals**: Applicants provide a short description of the project's background, objectives and methodology, along with a budget overview.

> Short proposal deadline: April 15, 2026, 2pm CET.

- **Full proposals:** Proposals selected by the jury are invited to submit an extended proposal that includes a detailed project budget. **The decision if admitted to the full proposal phase is expected between May 15 to May 30.**

> Full proposal deadline: July 30, 2026, 2pm CET.

- The funding decision for the full proposals is expected for end of December 2026.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Submission

> Applications must be submitted via the WWTF Funding Portal. All application information will be processed via this system.

- All core team members, i.e., coordinating PI (PI&C) and co-PIs, may access and edit the proposal. **Only the PI&C can submit the proposal.**
- The structure of the proposal and steps for completing the application in the WWTF Funding Portal are described in more detail in the Submission Guideline. There are some specifics to this call which can be found here.
- **Signatures of the authorized signatory at participating institutions** ("authorizations") are required in the application process (only for institutions of core team members in the short proposal phase, also for all partner institutions in the full proposal phase). Please contact your institution's research service in advance and inform yourself about your institute's internal processes and timelines.
- Applications must be written in **English**. Submission in other languages will be formally rejected.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Eligibility and roles of applicants

The general eligibility of applicants is specified in the WWTF Funding Guideline *(in German only)*.

A project's **core team** may include **up to three Principal Investigators (PIs).** This includes a PI&C and up to two co-PIs.

- Core team members may share equal management and scientific roles in the project.
- The core team must have an excellent scientific track record that demonstrates the ability to conduct the proposed research project.
- WWTF especially encourages young and female scientists to apply as PI.
- **Each core team member must submit a CV**, which will form part of the evaluation.

> A researcher may appear as a core team member (i.e., PI&C, co-PI) **in a maximum of two proposals** in this call. In case of three or more proposals with the same PI, WWTF will accept the first two proposals submitted. Involvement in other past / ongoing / granted WWTF projects does not impact upon eligibility to apply in this call.

One PI must be designated as **PI&C** (PI and coordinator).

- For legal and administrative reasons (funding contract, reporting), WWTF requires a PI&C to be named. The PI&C will be the contact person for WWTF regarding all aspects of the project.
- The PI&C must have an affiliation at a Viennese research institution, which will serve as a legal contract partner. This also applies to researchers moving to Vienna, who must have a Viennese affiliation in case of funding.
- The PI&C should be an expert in an area relevant to the topic of the proposal. The PI&C must have an excellent scientific track record and a proven capability to manage projects.

Up to two **co-PIs** may also be named in the core team.

- WWTF recognizes that co-PIs may have equally significant scientific roles in the project. However, the PI&C will be regarded as the main contact person for the project.

- Co-PIs may be based in Vienna, Lower Austria or elsewhere (in Austria or internationally) in fulfilment of the requirements of regular WWTF projects or Joint Projects (see below).

Additional **project partners and collaborators** are permitted in the research team. They can be added by name in the full proposal stage.

- Non-academic collaboration partners (e.g., NGOs) may be part of the research team. However, the core team members and majority of additional team members in the proposal should have an academic background.
- Industry partners are not eligible for funding, but may partake with in-kind or financial contribution.

Research partners outside Vienna:

- For regular WWTF projects, project partners outside of Vienna may receive up to 20% (i.e., <20%) the total requested funding.
- This call operates under the "Joint Projects" agreement with the Province of Lower Austria .

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Project Partners outside of Vienna & Joint Projects with partners in Lower Austria

1. Project Partners outside of Vienna

Partners outside Vienna are possible and may request up to 20% (i.e., <20%) of the total budget. Partners can be located anywhere in Austria as well as abroad.

2. Joint Projects with partners in Lower Austria

> WWTF welcomes **Joint Project (JP) applications** between Viennese and Lower Austrian universities and research institutions in this call.

The aims of this initiative are to promote research cooperation between Lower Austria and Vienna on equal terms and to strengthen cooperation of research institutions in the Vienna region.

- To incentivize the cooperation, the total maximum funding amount for a JP consortium is € 750,000 (i.e., an additional € 50,000 compared to the maximum for a regular WWTF project).
- The PI&C must be affiliated to a research institution in Vienna.
- At least one co-PI must be affiliated to a research institution in Lower Austria.
- The share of the overall funding allocated to research institutions in Lower Austria must be >20% and <50%. In case that the Lower Austrian share is ≤20%, the project is considered as a regular WWTF project and is not eligible for the higher maximum funding amount.
- The Lower Austrian share is financed by the Province of Lower Austria. Hence, the Lower Austrian project partner must comply with the Lower Austrian Culture Promotion Act 1996 and the directives issued on the basis thereof. Further details will be provided in the funding contract.

- Partners outside Vienna or Lower Austria are also possible and may request up to 20% (i.e., <20%) of the total budget. However, the share of the budget allocated to partner(s) in Vienna must be at least 50% (i.e., ≥50%).
- Regional branches of Viennese Institutions (e.g., BOKU, VetMed, AIT) located in Lower Austria are considered as Vienna-based in the context of WWTF funding activities.

> A conversion between JPs and regular WWTF projects is not possible between the short and full proposal phases or at a later point of time.

ICT 26 / Digital Humanism / Structure of the proposal

The content and structure of the proposal are defined and specified in the Submission Guideline as well as directly in the WWTF Funding Portal. We encourage you to create a proposal in the Funding Portal to see the details of the proposal. By creating a proposal, you do not enter into any obligations toward WWTF. Incomplete and non-submitted proposals will be deleted after the call deadline.

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be provided with an additional Submission Guideline specifically for the second phase. An overview of the main parts of the short and full proposal is provided below:

Short Proposal	**Full proposal**
Scientific abstract (in English only)	Lay summary (in German) and scientific abstract (in English, specifically directed to Reviewers and Call Jury).
Project description (about 4-5 pages, 17,500 characters): outline of the main scientific research idea and approach (in an online form, therefore, figures are not possible)	Project description (14 pages): elaboration on the research idea and approach (template is provided). This part should be uploaded as PDF. It may contain figures, charts etc.
Project core team: CVs and roles in project (mandatory template is provided)	Project team and further collaboration partners: CVs for all core team members (mandatory template is provided) and roles in project of all team members
Budget overview in main budget categories	Detailed budget
Brief statement regarding ethical aspects	Ethical approval OR detailed description of ethical aspects, including feasibility and timeline for ethical approval
Signatures: from the authorising persons at the institutions of the core team members	Signatures: from the authorising persons at all participating institutions

> Please note that the short proposal is intended for a jury panel with expertise covering a range of topics and fields of Digital Humanism while the full proposal is primarily aimed at experts in the specific topics of the proposal (peer review). Even there, please keep in mind that the funding verdicts is made by a broadly composed call jury.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Evaluation criteria

The following criteria are used in the evaluation.

Main evaluation criteria

- **Scope**: Is the project within the scope of the call as described in this document?

> Projects that do not meet the key requirements regarding scope will be rejected by the jury, regardless of scientific quality.

The key criteria in the evaluation of proposals are are **scientific excellence of the project and applicants** and **interdisciplinarity**:

- **Innovative character** of the proposed research project: Does the proposed research work meet the highest relevant international quality standards? Does the project show scientific originality and innovative aspects? Are the methods and research approaches appropriate and innovative?
- **Scientific excellence and academic potential of the applicant(s)**: Do the applicants demonstrate the expertise and potential to conduct the proposed research? Please note that scientific track record is measured according to academic age.
- **Team composition and interdisciplinary collaboration**: Teams should include an appropriate mix of expertise, bringing together ICT and SSH researchers. A clear description of the roles of the individual partners and a clear project management plan must be presented. This should demonstrate how both ICT and SSH researchers will contribute to critical stages of developing and executing the project, and how communication will be fostered throughout the project lifetime.
- **Relevance:** does the proposed research contribute to mid- to long-term concepts that question/redefine/reevaluate how digital technologies & practices can be better aligned with established human values? Does the proposal contribute to ad-vances in Digital Humanism?

Further evaluation criteria

- **Feasibility:** Can the project realize its goals given the competences of the research team, the methods suggested, the time frame, resources, and budget?

- **Consideration of gender aspects**: The relevance of potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects of the proposed projects should be considered and explained throughout the proposal.
- **Open Science:** does the Proposal adhere to the principles of open science?

Other aspects:

- **Career breaks** such as for parental leave, care duties and longer illnesses will be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposals. Please indicate the time periods in the applicants' CV to allow them to be considered.

> Please note that the short proposal will be evaluated by a jury panel, who will be asked to act as generalists when evaluating proposals. In contrast, the full proposal will additionally be evaluated by reviewers with specific expertise in the topics of the proposal. Thus, an appropriate level of scientific detail should be provided at each stage to allow evaluation of the proposal by the respective audience.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Eligible costs

> All costs that are directly attributable to the project and are regarded as commonly required in the respective scientific fields are eligible for funding. Please also consider your organization’s internal guidelines for eligible expenses/costs.

Personnel costs

WWTF is dedicated to funding researchers. Hence, the larger share of the project’s budget should be allocated to personnel costs for researchers working on the project.

- Eligible forms of employment contracts are full-time and part-time contracts as well as marginal employments (“Arbeitsvertrag”). Contracts for services (“Werkvertrag”) are only permitted if the nature of the work means that it cannot be performed through employment contracts.
- All persons employed through a WWTF-funded project should receive a fair employment contract with at least a minimum wage according to the “Kollektivvertrag” (collective agreement) of the Austrian Universities / non-university research institutions. For staff employed at institutions without a collective agreement, the minimum wage should adhere to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF salary scheme).
- Salaries higher than those stipulated in the collective agreement are possible, subject to the agreement from the host institution and justification based on qualifications of the researcher.
- Due to projected inflation rates, the budget calculation for salaries in the Funding Portal automatically includes an increase of 3.5% p.a. for the duration of the project (in the full proposal online form).
- Applications for personnel costs must be in one of the following categories:
  - **Senior Personnel:** highly qualified scientists, usually permanently employed
  - **Post Doc:** or equivalent qualification, including Senior Postdocs
  - **PhD Student:** or equivalent qualification level
  - **Diploma Student:** Bachelor or Master students
  - **Office/Technician:** administrative or technicians (proportional funding only)

- Personnel costs **cannot** be claimed for permanent senior staff who are already fully financed by the institution. Exceptions apply in cases where senior staff must acquire third party funding for co-financing their own position (e.g., non-university research institutions

and Universities of Applied Sciences). In these cases, permanently employed senior staff may claim up to 20% of their annual salary from WWTF.

Non-personnel costs

Running costs for basic infrastructure (telephone costs, rents) as well as costs for the acquisition of infrastructure and basic equipment are **not** eligible for funding, as these should be covered by the category “overhead costs”. The following categories of non-personnel costs are eligible for funding:

- **Equipment:** Smaller equipment can be purchased with funds from the grant. This includes devices up to € 1,500 each, as well as software specific to the projects. General office software is not eligible for funding. Funding by WWTF in project calls is not intended to cover investment in general and larger infrastructure. However, pro rata depreciation rates over the project duration for equipment necessary to the project may be funded.
- **Consumables**: Costs for project-related expenses like consumables are permitted. WWTF does not fund consumables that are general and not project-specific (e.g., paper, printer toner).
- **Travel costs**: Costs for travel and accommodation for scientific meetings and conferences, field work, expeditions may be funded. Please also consider the regulations of your organization for travel costs.
- **Publication costs:** Costs incurred for publication activities, e.g., printing costs, article processing charges (for open science), etc. are allowed. This also includes costs for archiving research data in open repositories. Please also consider WWTF's Open Science Policy.
- **Workshop/conferences**: Costs for organizing events, workshops, and conferences as well as for hosting invited speakers are eligible. Other costs: Third-party costs, namely, for external collaboration, consulting, studies, and software development may be funded to a limited extent. In general, individuals should be predominantly funded through employment contracts at the participating institutions and not through other types of employment. Under special conditions, costs for childcare and/or career coaching for female WWTF-funded personnel may be requested to a small degree.

> Non-personnel costs should not exceed 30% of the overall budget.

Indirect costs (overheads)

> WWTF pays a maximum of 20% overhead.

Overhead is calculated as a percentage of the direct costs of the project (i.e., personnel + non-personnel costs). Please note that WWTF offers the maximum 20% overhead lump sum to compensate for all administration costs. This means that flat fees for payroll or project accounting are not eligible. The total funding volume is calculated as direct plus indirect costs.

Applicants are required to comply with the overhead regulations of the involved institutions.

> Please consider WWTF's Recognition of Costs in Funding Guidelines (in German only. Please use your preferable translation program to translate the guidelines into English).

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Gender aspects in the application phase

> WWTF’s Gender Strategy and Gender Equality Plan must be considered throughout the application. Please regard WWTF's guidelines and instructions, in particular the chapter regarding the proposal phase.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Guidelines for good scientific practice and ethics (incl. AI use in proposal writing)

Good scientific practice

Compliance with the **rules for good scientific practice,** including the observance of ethical aspects in research, is mandatory. This pertains to the application process and, in case of funding, the research work.

- WWTF is member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI) and thus committed to their standards for good scientific practice. Hence, applicants must comply to OeAWI standards
- In case of suspected scientific misconduct, WWTF will employ the ombudsperson at the applicant's institution or request OeAWI to investigate the case.
- Based on the outcome of investigations by the ombudsperson or OeAWI, WWTF reserves the right to exclude the applicants and the application from the involved and future calls.

Use of AI in Proposal Writing

WWTF recognizes that the use of genAI tools is pervasive and can facilitate proposal writing, for example in relation to improving written language. However, substantial use of genAI must be declared as such for the sake of transparency.

> "Substantial use" is defined in line with the European Commission's definition: "[…] using generative AI as a basic author support tool is not a substantial use. However, interpreting data analysis, carrying out a literature review, identifying research gaps, formulating research aims, developing hypotheses, etc. could have a substantial impact." (EC 2024: Living Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research.)

This mainly concerns critical parts of scientific relevance, such as hypothesis formulation and the scientific project plan. Applicants will be required to provide statements on the use of generative AIs at both the short and full proposal stages. WWTF emphasizes the importance of human responsibility for the content submitted at all stages of the application process.

> In review and evaluation processes WWTF does not allow AI to be used for the actual formation of judgments and decision-making.

Ethical aspects

Project proposals may include **ethical aspects** that require the approval from an ethics committee/institutional review board. Please consider WWTF's requirements regarding ethical aspects at the different stages of the call and, if applicable, upon the selection of a project for funding.

- In the short proposal, applicants provide a brief statement regarding the ethical aspects of the project. Applicants must indicate whether a formal ethical approval is required for the proposed work.

> When in doubt, WWTF may require a verdict of an ethics committee even if the projects has identified no potential ethical issues regarding their proposed work.

- Upon invitation to submit a full proposal, applicants must provide a more detailed description of the ethical aspects of the proposed work. If available, the ethical approval (final or preliminary) or confirmation of submission of an ethical approval should be submitted. If an ethical approval for the proposed work has yet not been granted, applicants must provide a timeline and an explanation of the feasibility of obtaining the necessary ethical approvals. In the latter case, applicants commit themselves to obtaining the required permits to commence the project in a timely manner, should it be selected for funding.
- Upon selection for funding, submission of the final ethical approvals to WWTF is a prerequisite for the funding contract. As projects must start no later than 6 months after funding approval, grantees must ensure that ethical approvals are submitted to WWTF in time for the funding contract to be concluded.

> Please note that the feasibility of obtaining the required ethical approval will be considered during the evaluation of the full proposal. Insufficient demonstration of the ability to obtain ethical approvals within a timely manner may result in the project being excluded by the jury panel.

Please note the following requirements regarding **ethical approvals** for WWTF-funded projects.

- The approval by the ethics committee should be specific for the planned 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, a statement must be provided (in the Funding Portal), confirming that the approval will cover the planned research.
- If the main applicant for the ethical approval is not a core team member (i.e., PI&C or co-PI) of the WWTF proposal, a clear statement must be included in the proposal, in which a 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.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Open Science

WWTF requires compliance with its Open Science Policy. This document outlines the rights, roles and responsibilities of WWTF, researchers, and research organizations.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Selection and decision process

Applications must be submitted via the online Funding Portal in the specified timeframes. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

The core element of WWTF's decision-making processes is an **international jury** mandated to make a funding recommendation to the WWTF boards.

- Depending on the call (size, scope etc) the jury is comprised of 6-12 outstanding international experts who have no current affiliation to an Austrian institution.
- Jury members are selected by WWTF according to their expertise in the call topic. They have no known conflict of interest prior to the submission deadline. For details, see section on evaluation below.
- The names of jury members will be published on the WWTF website after the WWTF Board of Directors finalize the formal funding decision.

Formal eligibility check by WWTF

WWTF office will conduct a formal eligibility check of the proposal based on the criteria outlined in the WWTF Funding Guideline, and this document. This includes:

- All required signatures from the appropriate persons are uploaded.
- All projects will be checked for plagiarism with software.
- Submission of the same or highly similar research ideas to other funding organizations, which must be explicitly declared in the full proposal. Application for funding at other organizations is permitted and will not impact the evaluation. In case of funding, applicants will be asked by which organization they wish to be funded, as double funding is not permitted by WWTF.

Substantial deficiencies and missing sections in the application will lead to the exclusion of the application from further evaluation and rejection on formal grounds. The strict timeline of the call does not allow for proposals to be sent back to the applicants for amendments.

Evaluation of short proposals

- Each proposal is independently assessed by at least two jury members based on the evaluation criteria.
- The jury decides in a meeting (on-site or online) if a short proposal should be invited to the full proposal stage. This usually takes place 1-2 months after the short proposal submission deadline.
- All applicants will be promptly informed about the decision. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a short jury statement explaining the decision. Successful applicants will be informed that they are invited to submit a full-length proposal.

Evaluation of full proposals

- All duly submitted full proposals are checked again for formal aspects. Proposals which do not meet the formal requirements will be rejected at this stage.
- The information provided in the full proposal must be consistent with the short proposal and extend it by providing more information and details. Major deviations to the short proposal must be justified explicitly. If major deviations cannot be satisfactorily explained, it may be rejected by the jury at this stage.

Eligible full proposals will undergo a **review process**.

- WWTF will obtain a minimum of two (usually 3-4) written reviews for each proposal.
- Reviewers are international experts in the topic(s) of the proposals. WWTF does not contact reviewers based in Austria. WWTF aims for diversity in the cohort of reviewers for a call (gender, age, countries).
- All reviewers will be checked by the WWTF office for potential conflicts of interests with the applicants. As a rule, reviewers should not have close professional relations to any of the applicants in the project team. Practically, this excludes reviewers that have published with the applicants within the last five years or have had a collaboration in a research project in this timeframe. In case of very close cooperation with the applicant(s) over a longer period of time, the reviewer will also be excluded. Joint publications in an edited volumes/proceeding, “community papers” with more than 30 authors or common attendances in workshops and conferences do not qualify as conflict of interest. Additionally, reviewers are asked to disclose any potential conflict of interest.
- Reviewers will be asked to provide their assessment of the proposal through a standardised online questionnaire.
- The expert reviewers remain anonymous to the applicants.
- Jury members nominate reviewers. In addition, in the full proposal submissions, applicants are asked to suggest 5 experts whom they deem qualified to review the proposal. WWTF office will check the reviewers for potential conflict of interests. WWTF office is free to choose/not to choose any of the suggested experts.
- Applicants may also exclude up to 3 persons without stating any reasons. Reviewers on the negative list will not be contacted.

Full Proposal Jury meeting

The jury will convene about 3-4 months after the submission deadline of the full proposals to select full proposals to recommend for funding. The jury may be extended by additional members in case supplementary expertise is needed to cover the topics of the proposals. At least two jury members are assigned to each proposal and act as rapporteurs for the proposals.

- The basis for the evaluation by the jury are the full proposals, the external reviews, and the applicant's response to reviews. The arguments brought forward in the review reports will be carefully balanced with the jury's own expertise.
- The result is a recommendation for each project: "to be funded" or "not to be funded".

Formal funding decision

The jury recommendation will be formally confirmed first by the WWTF Advisory Board and then approved by the WWTF Board of Directors.

- Applicants will be promptly informed about the decision.
- The decision may include budget cuts as well as additional conditions and recommendations.
- Unsuccessful applicants will receive a short statement by the jury explaining the main reasons why the project was not selected for funding.

> Please note that WWTF does not allow the opportunity for rebuttals to either recommendations by the jury panel or decisions by the WWTF Board of Directors.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / In case of a positive funding decision ...

Conclusion of a Funding Contract

In case of funding, WWTF office will contact the PI&C to draw up the funding contract.

- WWTF encourages projects to start as soon as possible after the formal funding decision by the WWTF Board of Directors. To facilitate a timely project start, WWTF will directly contact the PI&C shortly after the funding decision to commence the contracting process.
- The formal start of the project may be **no later than 6 months** after the formal funding decision. Please note that WWTF does not require all team members of the funded project to begin by the project's start date. However, WWTF expects grantees to nominate a formal starting date for their project that is no later than 6 months after the notification of the funding decision.
- The PI&C will be provided with the necessary documents for the contracts.
- The formal funding contract will be signed between WWTF and the host institution of the PI&C. In Joint Projects, the host institution of the co-PI in Lower Austria is an additional contract partner.
- For universities, this is a project according to §27 of the Universities Act 2002. The institution then authorizes the respective PI to sign for the full scientific and financial responsibility of the project.

Monitoring and Reporting of Funded Projects

Funded teams commit themselves to delivering reports and participating in evaluation and monitoring. WWTF offers the possibility to adapt the work plan according to project needs. For details, see the Reporting and Accounting Guideline.

Community Building & Doctoral College on Digital Humanism

WWTF is highly committed to supporting the growing Digital Humanism community in Vienna. To this end, several community building activities will be offered throughout the funding cycle. Funded teams will be invited to participate in these activities to foster collaborations between and beyond WWTF funded projects.

Since 2024, WWTF is funding the Doctoral College on Digital Humanism. Hosted by TU Wien, the University of Vienna, and WU Wien, it provides a interdisciplinary doctoral training programme for Digital Humanism topics. This might be an opportunity for the predocs funded by this call. The participation in the Doctoral College is not mandatory but we strongly encourage funded projects to contact the coordinators of the Doctoral College to explore the possibilities of a collaboration.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Submission Guideline

These pages include the specific guidelines for the ICT26 call. General guidelines and FAQs on how to use the Funding Portal can be found here.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Details of Chapters (Full Proposal)

I. General information

- All proposals must be submitted electronically via the WWTF's Funding Portal. The Funding Portal will automatically save your entries and changes. You can pause data entry at any time. All information will be available again upon your next login.
- All core team members (i.e., coordinating PI and co-PIs) can contribute to and edit the proposal before its submission. However, only one person can edit the proposal in the Funding Portal at any time.
- Please go to the User Guide Funding Portal for all general matters, e.g. regarding creating your profile, roles, CVs, etc.
- All sections of the proposal must be written in English.
- The length of the proposal is determined by character counts (including spaces) and page limits in case of uploads in the Funding Portal.
- The full proposal will be assessed by **experts in the specific topics of the proposal**. These experts will provide written assessments for the jury panel, whose collective expertise covers a range of topics in this call.

> Please write the full proposal in a way that allows assessment by both expert reviewers and a broad high-level jury panel.

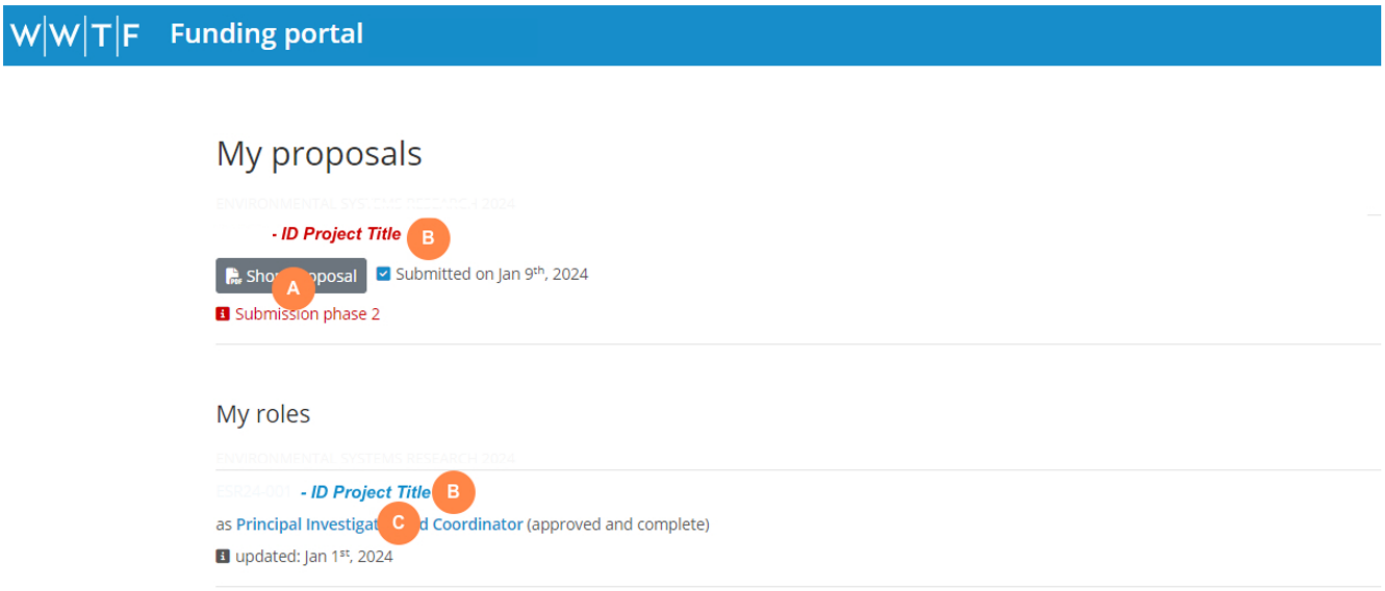
Overview of the full proposal phase

- Deadline for submission of full proposals: July 30, 2026, 2pm CET
- The reviewing by external experts commences in August
- Meeting of jury panel to select projects for funding: Late November 2026
- Funding decision of WWTF's Board of Directors: December 2026
- Announcement of Results: December 18, 2026.

> Please note that only the coordinating PI (PI&C) can**submit** the proposal.

Accessing your proposal

1. Go to https://fundingportal.wwtf.at/
2. Login with your credentials
3. You will see an overview of your proposal(s) and role(s) under the menu “My Proposals & Roles"



- **A** Click on “Short Proposal” to download a PDF of your submitted short proposal
- **B** Click on the project title to edit the full proposal
- **C** Click on your role to edit your specific role in this proposal

Update information about PIs

> Contact details, CV, and information about your role in the project have been automatically transferred from the short proposal to the full proposal. Please ensure the information in the tab "My Profile" and "My Roles" is up-to-date. Only update information if required.

Step 1: Update your profile information if required

Upon login, go to “My Profile” in the top menu to update your profile. To update your CV, delete the previous document and upload a new CV as PDF. The requirements regarding the CV in the full proposal are the same as those in the short proposal . Please review these requirements here.

Step 2: Update information about your specific role in the proposal if relevant

Go to “My Proposal & Roles” in the top menu. Under “My Roles”, click on your role below the title of the proposal.

- You can update the personal information by clicking on “Refresh from profile”. The system will check if there is new information in “My Profile” and update this section accordingly. Should you have uploaded a new CV in "My Profile", it will now be transferred to the full proposal.
- The requirements regarding the description of your specific role in the full proposal are the same as those in the short proposal. Please review these requirements here.

Please note that the information entered here should be specific to the project. If you are participating in multiple proposals that require different subsets of your expertise, please tailor the information according to the project. Click here for further information on how to update your CV when participating in more than one project.

II. Proposal Chapters

General Information

The full proposal is comprised of six chapters, each under a separate tab:

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

A chapter with a **red alert** symbol indicates that it is incomplete. Within the marked chapter, click on the red symbol(s) beside individual sections to highlight the fields requiring attention. A **green checkmark** indicates that the information in the chapter is complete.

> Please note that the symbols might not refresh immediately even if the information in the chapter is complete. Changing to another chapter and going back to the other will refresh the symbol.

Chapter Basic Information

> The name, acronym, nominated scientific disciplines, project duration and type of project (regular WWTF Project or Joint Project) can **no longer** be changed.

- **Keywords**: These will help the WWTF identify appropriate reviewers for your proposal. Keywords may still be edited or added.
- **Suggested peer reviewers**: Applicants must suggest **five** international peers whom they deem qualified to review the proposal. To enable the selection of a balanced set of reviewers, please provide keywords or phrases to describe the reviewers' fields of expertise. Suggested reviewers must be based
  - **outside of Austria** and
  - have **no conflict of interests** with project applicants (complete team and collaborators). Persons with whom the project applicants have worked together (joint publications, research cooperations, etc.) in the last five years will not be considered.
- Please note that the WWTF will decide if suggested peers will be contacted for reviewing, and WWTF may take different reviewers to those you suggested. As a rule, WWTF will include a maximum of two reviewers suggested by the applicants. The other reviewers are suggested by the jury and/or WWTF office to avoid bias.
- **Excluded peer reviewers**: Applicants may, without stating any reasons, exclude up to three individuals from reviewing their proposal.

The names of the peer reviewers suggested and excluded by the applicants will be shared with the jury panel but not disclosed to potential reviewers themselves. Each proposal is reviewed by no less than three reviewers.

Chapter Personnel and Institutions

> The addition, removal, or substitution of core team members (PI&C, co-PIs) are **not** permitted at this stage. WWTF may make exceptions in well-argued circumstances (e.g., a co-PI moving to an institution abroad or leaving the academic field).

Should well-justified changes in the core team be necessary, please contact WWTF. WWTF reserves the right to exclude projects from further evaluation in cases in which PIs can no longer be part of the project team.

Further partner institutions: Collaborating institutions beyond those of the core team members can be added in this stage. Please note that every person involved in the project must be linked to an institution in order to allow indication of time commitment and salary in the "Budget" section. A **signature** will be required from the authorizing persons at the core team members' institutions and at all further partner institutions. A maximum of **five different institutions** (including those of the core team members) is permitted. Should a project be funded, the addition of further collaborations will be possible.

Chapter Project

This is the main section of the proposal that requires elaboration of the project's scientific content.

> Please note that the character limit includes spaces.

Lay summary (*max. 1,200 characters*)

Please provide a description of your proposed research in German that is suitable for the general public. This will primarily be used by WWTF for communicating your work to non-experts for fundraising and public relations purposes.

Scientific abstract (*max. 2,000 characters*)

Please provide a concise scientific abstract of the project. This will be used in approaching reviewers. The abstract has been taken automatically from the short proposal, but may be edited for the full proposal.

Work program (*max. 14 pages*)

> Please use the template provided for download in the WWTF Funding Portal. **Instructions on how to use the template are in a box directly in the template document.** References are included in the 14 pages.

Ethical considerations (*max. 1,000 characters*)

If available, the ethical approval (final or preliminary) or confirmation of submission of an ethical approval should be submitted. If an ethical approval for the proposed work has yet not been granted, applicants must provide a timeline and an explanation of the feasibility of obtaining the necessary ethical approvals. In the latter case, applicants commit themselves to obtaining the required permits to commence the project in a timely manner, should it be selected for funding.

> Upon selection for funding, submission of the final ethical approvals to WWTF is a prerequisite for the funding contract. As projects must start no later than 6 months after funding approval, grantees must ensure that ethical approvals are submitted to WWTF in time for the funding contract to be concluded.

Data management (*max. 500 characters*)

Please explain how you deal with the data in your project (sharing, accessibility, metadata, sustainability, ownership).

Use of generative AI (max. *500 characters*)

Please describe if and how GenAI has been used in developing your research proposal.

WWTF recognizes that the use of genAI tools is pervasive and can facilitate proposal writing, for example in relation to improving written language. However, substantial use of genAI must be declared as such for the sake of transparency.

> “Substantial use” is defined in line with the European Commission’s definition: “[…] using generative AI as a basic author support tool is not a substantial use. However, interpreting data analysis, carrying out a literature review, identifying research gaps, formulating research aims, developing hypotheses, etc. could have a substantial impact.” (EC 2024: Living Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research.)

This mainly concerns critical parts of scientific relevance, such as hypothesis formulation and the scientific project plan. Applicants will be required to provide statements on the use of generative AIs at both the short and full proposal stages. WWTF emphasizes the importance of human responsibility for the content submitted at all stages of the application process.

> WWTF does not allow the use of genAI in the evaluation process.

> Please note that **potential sex/gender aspects of the research topic** and **gender balance in the research team** should be considered throughout the application (see here). These should be briefly described where appropriate in the relevant sections.

Budget

Please note the following guidelines for the budget:

- Maximum 15% difference between the budgets of the short and full proposals is permitted.
- Non-personnel costs should not exceed 30% of the total requested budget.

> The budget table requires assigning a person to an institution in order to calculate the budget per institution. Therefore, please first add the institutions under “Personnel and Institutions.”

Personnel costs

- Core team members of the short proposal are automatically listed in the respective table.
- Click “Additional person” to individually add all persons who will work on the project. Please provide their name or select “is N.N.” if the role is to be filled (e.g., PhD candidate, Post Doc). Indicate the affiliation and staff category of each person using the dropdown menu. If an affiliation is not listed, return to the section “Personnel and Institutions” and add the respective institution. Each person must be assigned to an institution.

- Specify if the person will be financed by WWTF or contribute on an in-kind basis, and indicate their yearly time commitment to the project for each year (full time equivalents). A mixture of WWTF and in-kind financing is permitted.
- For persons financed by WWTF, enter the annual salary that corresponds to 100% annual gross costs in the first year of the project (employer and employee costs = gross costs / “Brutto-Brutto-Jahresgehalt”). Please note that PhD positions are often calcuated on a 75% employment basis. The total funding requested for each person will be automatically calculated.
- For personnel costs, an annual 3.5% p.a. increase in salary over the lifetime of the project has been pre-programmed. This is intended to assist with planning only, and actual salaries should be paid according to institutional or collective agreements. Please use baseline salaries according to the date you expect to start the project, that is 2027. Please contact your institutional research support services in this matter.

Non-personnel costs

- Add rows to provide a concise overview of all non-personnel costs directly related to the project. Please select the institution and cost category from the dropdown menus. If an affiliation is not listed, return to the section “Personnel and Institutions” and add the respective institution.
- Costs for basic infrastructure (rent, telephone) are not permitted. Costs for larger equipment essential for the project may only be requested on a pro rata basis that also takes into consideration the proportion of time that the equipment will be used for this project.
- WWTF strongly encourages open access publications. Costs for Article Processing Charges (APCs) may be requested.
- Costs for data management purposes (e.g., curation, storage) are eligible.

Budget per region

- The share of the budget allocated to the regions “Vienna” and “Other” will automatically be shown for WWTF projects, and to the regions “Vienna”, “Lower Austria” and “Other” for Joint Projects.
- For regular WWTF projects, at least 80% of the requested funding must be allocated to the region “Vienna”. Up to 20% may be allocated to other partner(s), including partners in Lower Austria.
- For Joint Projects, the budget allocated to the region “Vienna” must be at least 51%. The share of the budget allocated to the region “Lower Austria” may range from 21% to 49%. Up to 20% may be allocated to any further partner(s) located in other regions (“Other”).

Cost overview

- Enter the overhead rate for each institution. WWTF permits a maximum of 20% overheads costs. Please consult each institutions’ research services to ensure compliance with all institutions’ internal regulations.

Explanation of Cost Planning (*max. 2,500 characters*)

- Please provide an explanation of cost planning principles, also indicating access to resources that are already available.

Disclosure of other applications for funding (*max. 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 the evaluation of this proposal.
- Double submissions will be reviewed by the FWF. This means that the FWF will receive the list of projects and check whether a similar project has already been submitted to the FWF.
- WWTF does not allow double funding. If your proposal is selected for funding by both WWTF and another funding organisation, we will ask you to decide which funding you will accept.

Chapter Signatures

> Submission of the proposal requires the signatures of the authorized person(s) at the host institutions of each of the PI&C and co-PIs (“Authorization”). For the full proposal, also signatures of further institutions added are required.

- Please consult your **institutional research services** regarding the person mandated to sign the proposals and plan sufficient time to obtain their signatures.
- Enter the name of each authorized person in the online form. This information will be included in the PDF to be signed. In case that the institution has applied before, the system suggests already a signing person. Please check if this is still the person authorized to sign. **You can overwrite the suggested entry manually.**
- Download the PDF using the link “You can generate the signature sheet here”.
- Signatures may be provided in various formats
  - Add a scanned or physical signature, and upload the form; or
  - Insert an electronic signature (e.g., A-Trust, Handysignatur) and upload the form. Please note that electronically signed PDFs cannot be merged into a single document.

> Please note that signatures do not have to be on the same sheet. The upload of multiple signature files is possible.

> Please ensure signatures are dated. Undated signatures will not be accepted.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Details of Chapters (Short Proposal)

Please go to the User Guide Funding Portal for all general matters, e.g. regarding creating your profile, roles, CVs, etc.

Please note that the inclusion of figures and tables is not possible in the short proposal. These elements can be included in the full proposal.

Chapter "Basic Information"

This chapter contains basic information about the proposal, including title, scientific disciplines involved, keywords, duration, and type of project (i.e., regular WWTF Project or Joint Project). Fill out fields as required.

Please note:

- **Scientific Disciplines:** Fields will be suggested as you type. WWTF uses the ÖFOS classification system of Statistik Austria. Please find the best match possible. Please note that WWTF uses these categories for statistical purposes only. It is not used for the assessment of individual projects. A maximum of 4 different scientific disciplines is possible.
- **Keywords:** These will help us to ensure appropriate reviewers for your proposal.
- **Joint Project:** Please indicate if this proposal is a Joint Project, i.e. includes partners from Lower Austria with a higher share possible from the overall project budget. For details regarding team composition and budget distribution, please see here.

Chapter "Personnel and Institutions"

This chapter contains information about the main parties in the project. Please see here how to invite PIs to the project.

- **Co-PIs** can be added to the project. Please note the maximum of three PIs in the core team.
- **Additional partner institutions** beyond those of the core team members can be added under “Further Partner Institutions”. (The institutions of the PI&C and co-PIs are automatically added by the system.) Entering an additional institution provides the option of allocating budget to this institution in the “Budget” chapter. This may be important in case of collaboration with researchers at institutes other than those of the core team members.
- A maximum of **five different institutions** may be involved in the proposal. This includes the institutions of the PI&C and co-PI(s).

> Before proceeding to the Chapter "Budget", please make sure that all PIs and CoPIs have been invited (and that they filled our the Profile and Role) and that all additional partner institutions are added. The Budget tool of the online form needs this information to allocate the cost lines to institutions. If this step has not been completed, the system might miscalculate the budget.

Chapter "Project"

This chapter contains the main part of the scientific information regarding the project.

- **Abstract:** The abstract may not exceed 2,000 characters. It may include the following aspects: (i) wider research context & theoretical framework; (ii) hypotheses, research questions & objectives ; (iii) methodological approaches; (iv) innovative aspects; (v) relevance and potential impact. The abstract should be written (1) for the jury composed both of SSH and ICT scholars and experts, (2) for potential reviewers. Potential reviewers are approached with the abstract to see if the reviewer is able to assess the proposal.
- **Proposal (Scientific Work Programme):** This part is the main scientific content of the proposal. ist must no exceed 17,500 characters (incl. spaces). It shall cover the following aspects:

  (1) Introduction and background
  (2) State-of-the-art including theoretical considerations
  (3) Research questions, hypotheses, objectives
  (4) Methodological approaches (novelty, feasibility)
  (5) Relevancy and innovativeness of the proposed project
  (6) Expected scientific and societal impact

  There are no specifications regarding the number of characters for the subsections of this part. The length of the subsections can be adjusted to the needs of the planned work.

- **Relevancy to Digital Humanism:** Please describe concisely how your planned work aligns with the idea of Digital Humanism and how your work aims to further it.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration and promotion of younger researchers:** Please describe here how you aim to organize the interdisciplinary collaboration in your team

between SSH and ICT and how you promote the education and career of the younger researchers in your team, in particular against the background of the challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration.

- **Ethical considerations** *(max. 1,000 characters):* Indicate if there is an ethical approval necessary as a formal requirement to conduct of your research project. Outline the potential ethical aspects of your proposed project. These may include, but are not restricted to human participants, the use personal data, but also the use of artificial intelligence. If no ethical aspects are identified, please also provide an explanation. Note that only providing a cursory statement (e.g., "no ethical aspects") will not be regarded as sufficient consideration of ethical aspects by the applicants. For more details, see here.
- **Use of generative AI** *(max. 800 characters):* Please describe if and how GenAI has been used in developing your research proposal. Please find further details here.

Chapter "References"

In this chapter, up to 18 key references relevant for the project can be added. Please use a continuous reference style.

> Please note that these references should focus on the content of the proposal and is not your personal publication list. The latter should be included in the CVs of the core team members.

You may use lookup tool provided by the system by entering the DOI of the publication . However, it may not find the correct full reference in all cases. Type in manually instead.

Chapter "Budget"

The short proposal requires only an overview budget for each participating institution. All institutions added in the chapter “Personnel and Institutions” will be automatically listed in the budget table.

> Make sure that all institutions are added before in the "Personnel and Institutions" chapter.

1. Enter the sum for personnel costs at each institution. Please consider that, in the full proposal, you will be required to enter the annual gross costs (employer and employee costs = gross costs / “Brutto-Brutto-Jahresgehalt”) of all individual researchers. If you are unsure about the annual gross costs, please consult your institutional research service. Due to projected inflation rates, the full proposal system will automatically calculate a 3.5% p.a. increase in salaries over the lifetime of the project.
2. Enter the total non-personnel costs for each institution. For details about eligible costs, please see here.
3. Enter the overhead costs for each institution. Note that up to 20% overhead costs may be claimed. Please consult your institutional research service also in this regard.

>

> The system will automatically calculate sums and ratios of the budget.

- Based on the information provided, the share of the budget allocated to the regions “Vienna” and “Other” will be shown for WWTF projects and to the regions “Vienna”, “Lower Austria” and “Other” for Joint Projects.
- For “regular” WWTF projects, at least 80% (i.e., ≥80%) of the requested funding must be allocated to the region “Vienna”. Up to 20% may be allocated to other partner(s) (including partners in Lower Austria).
- For Joint Projects, the budget allocated to the region “Vienna” must be ≥50%. The share of the budget allocated to the region “Lower Austria” must be between 20–49%. Maximum 20% may be allocated to further partner(s) located in other regions (“Other”).
- The proportions of the budget allocated to personnel and non-personnel costs are also shown. Please note that, in this call, non-personnel costs should not exceed 30% of the total budget.
- The system will display an alert if the inserted amounts exceed the permitted funding distribution across regions or cost types.
- Please note that changing the proposal between “WWTF Project” and “Joint Project” types will reset the budget table due to differing budget distribution requirements.

Explanation of Cost Planning *(max. 750 characters)*

Outline details about the planned allocation of resource allocation as requested in the budget.

> In the case of an invitation to submit a full proposal, there should not be significant changes in the requested budget compared to the short proposal. Exceptions are permitted but require justification.

Chapter "Signatures"

Please see general user guidelines.

ICT26 Digital Humanism / Support by WWTF office

WWTF aims to assist you in all matters regarding the submission process. If you do not find answers to your questions on these pages, please do not hesitate to contact us.

You can usually reach us during normal office hours.

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