LS26 Targeted Prevention / Good Scientific Practice and Ethics

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.

- As a member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI), WWTF is committed to their standards for good scientific practice. Applicants must therefore comply with 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 current and future calls.

Use of AI in Proposal Writing

WWTF recognizes that the use of generative AI (genAI) tools is pervasive and can facilitate proposal writing, for example by improving written language. However, substantial use of genAI tools 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 genAI 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.

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WWTF does not permit the use of AI for forming judgements or making decisions during the review and evaluation processes.

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 must 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.

If concerns are raised, WWTF may require the verdict of an ethics committee even if the project team has not identified any 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 their 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 not yet 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 necessary ethical approvals will be taken into account when the full proposal is evaluated. Insufficient demonstration of the ability to obtain ethical approval in 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 that of the proposed project, a statement confirming that the approval will cover the planned research must be provided in the Funding Portal.

- 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, the proposal must include a clear statement from a core team member confirming that they are authorised to conduct the planned research within the scope of the 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”) as part of their application. The above also applies for extensions.

> Non-compliance will result in the proposal being rejected on formal grounds.

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