LS26 Targeted Prevention / Selection and Decision Processes

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, the jury comprises 6-12 outstanding international experts who have no current affiliation with an Austrian institution and no other known conflicts of interest.
- Jury members are selected by WWTF according to their expertise in the topic of the call.
- The names of the jury members will be published on the WWTF website once the formal funding decision has been finalised by the WWTF Board of Directors.

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 short proposal is independently assessed by at least two jury members based on the evaluation criteria.
- The jury decides at a meeting whether to invite a short proposal to the full proposal stage. This usually takes place 1-2 months after the short proposal submission deadline.
- All applicants will be informed of the outcome in a timely manner. Unsuccessful applicants will receive a short jury statement explaining the decision. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full-length proposal.

Evaluation of full proposals

- All full proposals submitted in accordance with the guidelines 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 and extend the information in the short proposal. Any major deviations from the short proposal must be explicitly justified. If these deviations cannot be satisfactorily explained, the proposal may be rejected by the jury at this stage.

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

- WWTF will obtain a minimum of two written reviews (usually three or four) 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. In practice, this excludes reviewers who have published with the applicants within the last five years or who 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 edited volumes/proceedings, 'community papers' with more than 30 authors, and common attendance at workshops and conferences do not constitute a conflict of interest. Additionally, reviewers are asked to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
- Reviewers will be asked to provide their assessment of the proposal via a standardised online questionnaire.
- The expert reviewers remain anonymous to the applicants.
- Jury members will nominate reviewers. In addition, in the full proposal submissions, applicants are asked to suggest five 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 three 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. Additional members may be added to the jury if supplementary expertise is needed to cover the topics of the proposals. At least two jury members will be assigned to each proposal to act as rapporteurs.

- The jury's evaluation is based on the full proposals, the external reviews and the applicant’s response to the reviews. The arguments put forward in the reviews will be carefully weighed against 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 first be formally confirmed by the WWTF Advisory Board, and then approved by the WWTF Board of Directors.

- Applicants will be promptly informed of 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 their project was not selected for funding.

> WWTF does not permit rebuttals of recommendations by the jury panel or decisions by the WWTF Board of Directors.

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