Selection and decision process

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

- The jury is comprised of outstanding international experts selected by WWTF that have no current affiliation to an Austrian institution
- Please note that the proposals are intended for a jury panel with expertise covering a range of proposals.
- Please note that there is no opportunity for rebuttals to either recommendations by the jury panel or decisions by the WWTF Board of Directors.

Formal eligibility check by WWTF

WWTF office conducts a formal eligibility check of the proposal based on the criteria outlined in the WWTF Funding Guideline. 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 proposals

- All duly submitted proposals are checked for formal aspects. Proposals which do not meet the formal requirements will be rejected at this stage.

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

- WWTF will obtain a minimum of two 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.
- In addition, each proposal is independently assessed by at least two jury members.
- The jury decides in a meeting (on-site or online) if a proposal should be recommended for funding. 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.

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

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