

START Programme

Differences from the General Principles of Decision-making Procedures

Introductory remarks: all decisions relating to the START Programme are taken by an international Jury. Decisions are based on written reviews (exclusively from international experts) and a hearing.

Submission of applications:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

However, applications within the START Programme may be submitted only by the deadline for applications, which is announced annually, and in accordance with the current “Guidelines for START applications” to the FWF. Only errors and problems communicated by the FWF can be corrected within no more than 10 days after receipt of an official notification of the FWF. If the applicant fails to do so, the FWF’s Executive Board will reject the applications without subjecting them to review.

Each application will be assigned to a Reporter and an Alternate and in addition to a Member of the International Jury, who will be primarily responsible for the application. In the case of inter- or multidisciplinary applications, more than one Jury Member may be involved.

The FWF’s guidelines described in the general principles of the decision-making procedure for handling conflicts of interest apply equally to the Members of the International Jury.

Initiation of international review:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

In each case, the International Jury will decide whether an application should be sent for review. Following receipt of applications, the Jury also nominates referees based on suggestions from the Reporter or the Alternate.

START applications may be rejected without review for formal reasons or for reasons of quality. Such decisions are taken by the International Jury based on recommendations from the FWF’s Board.

Minimum number of reviews:

For a positive decision on a particular application a minimum of 3 reviews are required. If it is clear from the reviews that the decision will be negative, a decision may be based on fewer reviews. If an application impinges on several scientific disciplines the number of reviews required may be increased.

Structure of a review:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

Reviewers are additionally requested to rate the scientific/scholarly quality and potential of the applicant on a five-point scale (excellent, very good, good, average, unsatisfactory).

Funding decisions:

Decisions on the award of START Grants are taken by the Board of the FWF based on recommendations of the International Jury. The recommendation of the Jury is based on the results of the international peer review and an interview, which will take place on the first day of the annual meeting of the International Jury. The meeting of the Jury usually lasts two days. The International Jury prepares a short-list of promising START candidates before the meeting (generally three to four weeks in advance). These candidates are invited to an interview during the Jury meeting. At the same time, applicants who are not on the short list are informed of the decision and receive the reviews of their applications, in anonymous form.

The International Jury reaches its list of recommendation for new START-projects in a closed session, i.e. in the absence of the FWF Board.

After the results are announced (generally within a week of the Jury meeting), the decisions are formally prepared by the FWF Secretariat and communicated to the applicants together with the corresponding reviews, in anonymous form.

The FWF Secretariat supports the Reporters and the Jury in their work and is the direct point of contact for applicants in all matters relating to the Programme.

Resubmissions:

Unsuccessful applications may be revised and resubmitted, provided that there is no proposal ban. In the case of a resubmission it is the general practice to contact some of the referees of the rejected version as well as new referees. It is thus important to draw attention to any changes made in response to explicit suggestions from the referees.

Review of the interim reports:

Following three years of a START project an interim report is prepared according to the relevant guidelines. This is subjected to international review (generally by the referees of the initial application). At least two written reviews are required. Based on the reviews, the FWF Board decides whether to extend the project and release the money reserved for the second funding period – in some cases after discussions with the International START/Wittgenstein Jury.