

# RTI DISSERTATIONS 2021

## CALL DOCUMENT

**DATE: 29.10.2021**

**UPDATE IN VERSION 29.10.2021:**

Ad 3. Procedure

- iii. Funding period
- Project start

The funding of the employment relationship can start at the earliest on **01.04.2021** ~~2022~~ (retroactive funding) and at the latest six months after signing the funding contract.

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## INTRODUCTION

The funding of the employment of PhD candidates at colleges, universities and non-university research institutions located in Lower Austria aims to strengthen the next generation of scientists in Lower Austria.

The targeted promotion and financial security of young scientists are important prerequisites for ensuring the scientific qualification and innovative strength of the state. Qualified young scientists contribute significantly to the fact that science and research institutions can act dynamically and gain research strength and visibility. The promotion of PhD candidates therefore increases the appeal of the location in national and international competition.

The Gesellschaft für Forschungsförderung NÖ (GFF NÖ) supports dissertation projects in non-profit Lower Austrian research and educational institutions by financing the employment of highly qualified PhD candidates in the field of basic and translational research.

**Applications can be submitted from 18.10.2021 to 21.01.2022, 12 noon in the GFF NÖ submission system at <https://calls.einreichsystem.at>.**

## I. THEMATIC ORIENTATION

Submission is possible for dissertation projects with reference to all fields of action of the RTI Strategy Lower Austria 2027:

- i. Health and nutrition
- ii. Environment, climate and resources
- iii. Digitalization, smart production and materials
- iv. Society and culture

## 2. GOALS

The promotion of the employment of PhD candidates should contribute to the following goals:

- i. Strengthening of young scientists in Lower Austria
- ii. Strengthening of colleges, universities and non-university research institutions in Lower Austria
- iii. Increasing the appeal and visibility of the location

## 3. PROCEDURE

### i. Submission

RTI calls are thematic calls for a limited period of time in which funding applications can be submitted. Submissions are made via the submission system of the GFF NÖ. The applications must be presented in English or German.<sup>1</sup> The submission of dissertation projects is possible from **18.10.2021 to 21.01.2022, 12 noon.**

### ii. Ex-ante evaluation

- Evaluation procedure and project selection
  - All applications submitted on time will first undergo an internal formal review by the GFF.
  - The GFF assembles a jury of at least four independent external experts: each field of action is represented by at least one expert. Attention is paid to a gender balance as far as possible.
  - The expert review is carried out by the jury members and / or additional independent external experts selected by GFF NÖ.
  - In the final jury meeting, the project selection is made on the basis of the expert opinions.
- Decision on project selection and funding

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the respective scientific discipline

The Supervisory Board of GFF NÖ decides on project selection and funding.

- Grant agreement

According to the resolution of the supervisory board of GFF NÖ, the funding agreement between GFF NÖ and the recipient is concluded on the basis of the guidelines for funding under the Lower Austrian Cultural Promotion Act 1996.

### iii. Funding period

- Project start

The funding of the employment relationship can start at the earliest on 01.04.2022 (retroactive funding) and at the latest six months after signing the funding contract. In justified exceptional cases (e.g. maternity leave), this deadline can be extended once for a later start upon application.

- Reporting

The annual reports (each as of 31.12.) are prepared and submitted by the funding recipients in the submission system of the GFF NÖ.

- Funding rates

Funding instalments are paid annually in advance. 10% of the funding instalments are withheld until after the final report has been examined.

- Conclusion

The formal conclusion of the funding takes place through the preparation and submission of the final report by the funding recipients in the GFF submission system.

### iv. Interim and ex-post evaluation

Within the framework of announced interim and / or ex-post evaluations, the funding agency or a third party commissioned by it may carry out an examination of the use of the funds in accordance with their intended purpose.

## 4. REQUIREMENTS

### i. Eligibility

- **Applicants** can be colleges, universities and non-university research institutions located in Lower Austria. The application must be submitted together with the dissertation candidate.
- Organisations in which the Land of Lower Austria has a direct majority shareholding (+50%) (with the exception of clinics and nursing homes) and commercial enterprises are **not eligible to apply**.
- **The formal supervisory relationship** for the dissertation project can be entered into with any university or research institution with the right to award doctorates in the member states of the EU. This does not have to be the institution submitting the application.

### ii. PhD candidate

- Proof of an academic degree entitling the holder to study for a doctorate or PhD at a university or research or educational institution with the right to award doctorates must be submitted.
- Admission of the dissertation topic at a university with the right to award doctorates (subsequent submission possible until 31.05.2022).
- There is no age limit.

### iii. Other requirements

- A fully completed and signed project application is a basic requirement for a positive funding decision.
- The dissertation project is to be thematically assigned to at least one field of action of the RTI Strategy Lower Austria 2027.<sup>2</sup>
- The doctoral candidate must be employed for the entire duration of the grant at an eligible institution located in Lower Austria.
- Stays / internships abroad are possible within the framework of the funded employment relationship, provided that they are of comprehensible benefit to the dissertation.
- Employment within the scope of the grant must be for at least 30 hours for the dissertation project described in the application and for activities that are demonstrably directly related to it.

**Failure to meet one or more of the requirements may result in disqualification of the application even before the expert review.**

## 5. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

### i. Nature and amount of funding

The funding is a grant. GFF NÖ funds 50% of the personnel costs based on the current annual FWF rates<sup>3</sup> for PhDs (incl. employer's share) for the employment of a PhD candidate with 30 hours per week.

### ii. Cooperations

A cooperative application by two independent eligible institutions is possible. In this case, a total of 100% of the personnel costs<sup>3</sup> (incl. employer's share) can be funded (50% of the funding per institution). The employment takes place with at least 15 hours at each of the two participating institutions, either with a separate employment contract or an employment at the first institution and a corresponding transfer contract to the second institution.

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<sup>2</sup> Health and nutrition; environment, climate and resources; digitalisation, smart production and materials; society and culture.

<sup>3</sup> The current FWF personnel cost rates at <https://www.fwf.ac.at/de/forschungsfoerderung/personalkostensaetze/> apply as the basis for assessment.

### iii. **Runtime**

Funding is awarded for the minimum duration of study (usually three to four years), but no longer than the completion of the PhD programme. The completion of the dissertation takes place with the issuance of the degree certificate.

A cost-neutral extension of the funding is possible in justified exceptional cases of up to one year and in the case of parental leave / maternity leave in accordance with the applicable legal provisions.

### iv. **Personal contribution**

The minimum amount of the personal contribution is 50% of the personnel costs<sup>3</sup> of the PhD candidate. The financing of the personal contribution through other third-party funds from private and / or public sources can be counted as part of the personal contribution, provided that they do not conflict with other funding conditions (EU, federal, state, etc.).

In the case of simultaneous employment at two eligible and independent institutions (see 5.ii.), no personal contribution is required.

### v. **Cost accounting**

The proper use of the funding must be demonstrated in the reporting system and, if necessary, in financial audits. Within the reporting framework, this proof is provided by means of structured cost centre statements or lists of documents. The financial audit is based on these cost center statements or lists of documents.

## 6. **CRITERIA FOR THE ASSESSMENT**

### i. **Formal assessment**

- i. Completeness of the application
- ii. Fulfilment of the conditions under point 4
- iii. Fulfilment of the financial conditions under point 5

### ii. **Expert review**

The evaluation is carried out on the basis of a point system by jury members and/or external independent experts (evaluation procedure see 3.ii). There are two main criteria (K1-2), each with three sub-criteria. Up to 5 points can be awarded per sub-criterion. The points for the main criteria result from the arithmetic mean of the sub-criteria. The more points awarded, the better the score.

- **Excellency [K1]**
  - Originality and scientific quality of the dissertation project [K1.1.]
  - Clear research questions and working hypotheses, and meaningful narrowing of the topic [K1.2.]
  - Appropriateness of methods [K1.3.]
- **Quality and efficiency of the planned implementation [K2]**

- Quality and efficiency of the work programme, as well as feasibility (including consideration of any risks) within the overall timeframe designed [K2.1.].
- Framework conditions and scientific environment of the participating institution(s) [K2.2.]
- Scientific qualification of the dissertation candidate [K2.3.]
  - Special suitability and motivation for the research project
  - Scientific / academic career
  - Publications

## 7. OBLIGATIONS OF THE APPLICANT ORGANISATION(S)

The applicant organisation is required to comply with the following points:

- i. Efficient, economical, appropriate and transparent use of funds with the diligence of a prudent entrepreneur.
- ii. Keeping separate and comprehensive records to demonstrate the implementation of the funded project. Securing storage of records and supporting documents during and for at least seven years after the end of the project, unless there are legal requirements to the contrary.
- iii. Management of an adequate accounting system.
- iv. Writing and submitting appropriate interim and final reports to the funding agency, according to the reporting structure provided by the agency.
- v. Allowing audits and evaluations by the funding agency and third parties commissioned by it and obligation to provide the relevant information.
- vi. Timely notification of all significant events relevant to the implementation of the funded project.
- vii. Provision of information for the public relations work of the funding agency.
- viii. Mentioning of the funding agency and the province of Lower Austria as the funding body in publications and events in connection with the funded activity.
- ix. Respect for human dignity and fundamental human rights, in particular in the areas of anti-discrimination, gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, climate protection and sustainability.

## 8. TERMINATION AND RECOVERY OF FUNDING

Decisions on the termination and recovery of funding are made by the funding agency within the framework of the conditions specified in the respective funding agreement and in this document in the form of a written request to the main applicant. The following points in particular apply as grounds for the termination and recovery of funding:

- i. The funded costs (not the personal contribution) are additionally subsidised in whole or in part by the public sector (EU, federal government, state) or a charitable foundation (double funding).
- ii. The funding agency or third parties commissioned by it have been informed incorrectly or incompletely about material circumstances or a reporting obligation has been breached.
- iii. Despite previous written reminders, the required reports or evidence were not provided or the required information was not supplied.
- iv. Intended control measures were hindered or prevented or storage obligations were violated.



- v. The funds were used in whole or in part for purposes other than those for which they were intended.
- vi. The project was not started within six months of the funding approval without the approval of the funding agency.
- vii. Bankruptcy proceedings are opened against the assets of the main applicant before completion of the funded project or within a period of three years after its completion, or the opening of bankruptcy proceedings is refused due to lack of assets to cover costs, or the operation of the applicant institution is permanently discontinued within this period.

Unless otherwise determined by the funding agency, repayments must be made at an interest rate of 2% above the applicable 12-month EURIBOR.<sup>3</sup>

## 9. DATA PROTECTION

Your personal data will be processed as necessary for the duration of the entire business relationship (from the submission to the termination of a funding contract, including any necessary data transfer to the Province of Lower Austria as the funding provider, external reviewers, jurors and examiners), as well as in accordance with the statutory storage and documentation obligations within the framework of the currently applicable Austrian Data Protection Act (DSG) and the European General Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO).

## 10. LEGAL BASIS

- **NÖ Kulturförderungsgesetz 1996**  
[https://www.noel.gv.at/noe/Wissenschaft-Forschung/NOE\\_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz\\_1996.pdf](https://www.noel.gv.at/noe/Wissenschaft-Forschung/NOE_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz_1996.pdf)
- **Richtlinien für die Förderung nach dem NÖ Kulturförderungsgesetz 1996**  
[https://www.noel.gv.at/noe/Wissenschaft-Forschung/Richtlinien\\_zum\\_Noel\\_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz\\_1996.pdf](https://www.noel.gv.at/noe/Wissenschaft-Forschung/Richtlinien_zum_Noel_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz_1996.pdf)

These guidelines and the call document do not constitute a legal entitlement to the granting of funding, either in terms of the reason for the subsidy or the amount of the subsidy.

The place of jurisdiction for all disputes arising from the granting of a fund is the Regional Court of St. Pölten.

This call document comes into force on 18.10.2021 and applies to funding applications in the call "RTI Dissertations 2021". Amendments and the current version will be published on the website of GFF NÖ ([www.gff-noe.at](http://www.gff-noe.at)).