

ANNIVERSARY FUND  
of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank

## REVIEWER GUIDANCE

(August 2021)

## **The Anniversary Fund of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank**

Set up in 1966 to celebrate 150 years of central banking in Austria, the Anniversary Fund of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (OeNB) has since provided some EUR 820 million in funding for nearly 10,000 projects in basic research (and/or applied research up to 2003).

Today, the systematic promotion of basic research projects in 19 subject areas (see Anniversary Fund website) is an important contribution to research funding in Austria. The Anniversary Fund essentially targets medium-scale projects, with most of the funding earmarked for covering staff costs for young scientists. In doing so, the Anniversary Fund provides an important, meaningful and necessary complement to other instruments of research promotion.

In order to ensure value for money, we need the support of the scientific community. Reviews by qualified experts are invaluable in helping the Anniversary Fund make funding decisions with maximum impact.

Hence, any input provided by you empowers us to help advance scientific research. Thank you for your time and effort!

Vienna, August 2021

The Anniversary Fund

# Guidance for scientific reviewers

## General information

Scientific reviews provide the key basis of our funding decisions. Reviewers are nominated, based on their expertise, by the Anniversary Fund and on recommendation by members of an advisory panel.

To ensure fairness and transparency in evaluation and thus the integrity of research funding, any aspects that may give rise to a suspicion of reviewer bias must be addressed up front. With regard to assessing the risk of bias we rely on your judgment and due care. Should you identify any bias, please inform the Anniversary Fund before drafting your review.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from supporting the decision-making processes of the Anniversary Fund, your review provides constructive feedback to applicants, helping them to enhance and finetune their research design. Hence, your efforts will be much appreciated by them as well.

## General guidance on scoring

To ensure a structured review of the research proposal, please use our two-page review form with a weighted scoring matrix (annexed to the review request and available for download on our website). The idea is to generate a point-by-point assessment based on transparent criteria.

Please allocate your scores in four assessment sections:

- |                                   |                  |              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| ➤ Priority of the research topic  | (score of 0–100) | weighted 15% |
| ➤ Quality of the research concept | (score of 0–100) | weighted 25% |
| ➤ Proposed methodology            | (score of 0–100) | weighted 35% |
| ➤ Research team qualification     | (score of 0–100) | weighted 25% |

<sup>1</sup> You will find guidance on how to deal with conflicts of interest in the Downloads section of the Anniversary Fund's website ([www.oenb.at/fonds](http://www.oenb.at/fonds)).

The scoring matrix has been designed to allow for selective scoring in all four assessment sections:

<b>score of 100-95</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<p>The research proposal is deemed excellent (in the respective assessment section). Its scientific potential is high, promising to provide a substantial contribution to scientific progress. It is also highly competitive by international standards.</p> <p>Taking into account academic seniority, the team of researchers is exceptionally qualified by international standards.</p>
<b>score of 94-90</b>	<b>very high quality</b>	<p>The research proposal is deemed to be of very high quality (in the respective assessment section). The proposed research is expected to generate important evidence and input for scientific progress. Minor flaws have been identified, but they can be easily remedied during implementation.</p> <p>Taking into account academic seniority, the team of researchers is highly qualified by international standards.</p>
<b>score of 89-70</b>	<b>high quality</b>	<p>The research proposal is deemed to be of high quality (in the respective assessment section). The proposed research is expected to generate a number of findings. Some flaws/weaknesses have been identified, but remedying them during implementation should not be a problem.</p> <p>Taking into account academic seniority, the team of researchers is well qualified by international standards.</p>
<b>score of 69-50</b>	<b>average</b>	<p>The research proposal is deemed to be of average quality (in the respective assessment section), as it is characterized by significant weaknesses from various perspectives.</p> <p>Taking into account academic seniority, the team of researchers is adequately qualified by international standards.</p>
<b>score of 49-0</b>	<b>poor quality</b>	<p>The research proposal is deemed to be of poor quality (in the respective assessment section), as it is characterized by fundamental weaknesses which cannot be easily remedied during implementation.</p> <p>Taking into account academic seniority, the team of researchers is not adequately qualified by international standards.</p>

Figure 1: Scoring guidance

Since the funding requests submitted to the Anniversary Fund typically far exceed the available budget, only proposals rated “*excellent*” or possibly being of “*very high quality*” will be eligible for funding (based on aggregate average scores).

## Assessment sections

1. Priority of the research topic	2. Quality of the research concept	3. Proposed methodology	4. Research team qualification
Priority and innovativeness of proposed research question	Quality of research concept and subject, prospect for significant scientific discoveries	Adequacy of methods, clear working hypotheses	Scientific qualification of research team, evaluation of previous publications in the relevant field
Score of 0–100 weighted 15%	Score of 0–100 weighted 25%	Score of 0–100 weighted 35%	Score of 0–100 weighted 25%

Figure 2: Core criteria for the four scientific assessment sections

### Priority of the research topic

Questions to ask yourself when assessing the “*Priority of the research topic*”:

- Is the research proposal particularly innovative/crucial/original with a view to advancing the state of the art (also in an international context)?
- Is the proposed research aligned with recent scientific trends? Will/may the proposed research close a knowledge gap?

Please allocate a score of 0–100 for the “*Priority of the research topic*.” For the overall score, this subscore will be weighted 15%. Your written report will be forwarded to the applicant(s) in anonymized form after the funding decision.

### Quality of the research concept

Questions to ask yourself when assessing the “*Quality of the research concept*”:

- Is the research design/proposal of high quality in terms of its scope and conceptual framework?
- Is the proposed research likely to generate significant scientific evidence? Does it promise to contribute substantially to scientific progress?
- Does the proposed research cooperation with other institutions add scientific value that will enhance the quality of research?
- Does the proposed research provide an international context? (If applicable for the research question.)
- Will it be possible to complete the research project within the proposed timeframe and with the indicated resources?

Please allocate a score of 0–100 for the “*Quality of the research concept*.” For the overall score, this subscore will be weighted 25%. Your written report will be forwarded to the applicant(s) in anonymized form after the funding decision.

### Proposed methodology

Questions to ask yourself when assessing “*Proposed methodology*”:

- Is the proposed research based on clear and precise working hypotheses or research questions?
- Is the research methodology or the mix of methods proposed to answer the research questions adequate?
- Has the research question been adequately framed?
- Is the research proposal coherent and consistent?

Please allocate a score of 0–100 for “*Proposed methodology.*” For the overall score, this subscore will be weighted 35%. Your written report will be forwarded to the applicant(s) in anonymized form after the funding decision.

### **Research team qualification**

Questions to ask yourself when assessing “*Research team qualification*”:

- Is the identified team of researchers adequately qualified to implement the project as proposed?
- Does the team of researchers have a proven track record in terms of previous publications in the field? Have the researchers completed previous research projects in the field?
- Does the team of researchers have a high (international) academic reputation with regard to the research question?
- Have members of the research team been involved in generating results on which the research proposal is based?

Please allocate a score of 0–100 for “*Research team qualification.*” For the overall score, this subscore will be weighted 25%. Your written report will NOT be forwarded to the applicant(s) after the funding decision.

## **Financial aspects and concluding/other remarks**

### **Financial aspects**

Questions to ask yourself when assessing “*Financial aspects*”:

- How much will the proposed research cost in terms of staffing and other costs (equipment, materials, travel and other costs)?
- Does the research justify funding on the scale requested?
- If not: Which elements could be cut without compromising achievement?

Please keep the discussion of “*Financial aspects*” separate from your qualitative assessment. Your financial review is meant to identify prominent funding items to be discussed in the funding decision meetings. Your written report will be forwarded to the applicant(s) in anonymized form after the funding decision.

### **Concluding/other remarks**

The purpose of “*Concluding/other remarks*” is to provide the Anniversary Fund with a written overall evaluation of the research proposal, including any other information that may be relevant. Your written report will NOT be forwarded to the applicant(s) after the funding decision.

## Contact

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