

## **Statement by the FWF on the evaluation of the 1000 Ideas program**

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) would like to express its gratitude for the thorough and nuanced evaluation of the 1000 Ideas program. We welcome the positive findings regarding the program's impact and unique selling points, and appreciate the recommendations as a constructive roadmap for further strengthening transparency, fairness, learning outcomes, and connectivity.

The 2027 – 2029 budgetary framework allowing, the FWF will take up the following recommendations and implement them step by step.

### **Program type**

The evaluation confirms that 1000 Ideas is most effective as a stand-alone, high-risk/high-reward instrument. The FWF therefore reaffirms its continuation as a stand-alone program with small budgets, short durations, anonymized peer review and the possibility of partial randomization. This program structure ensures speed, a willingness to experiment, and low entry barriers for applicants, and promotes novel approaches that would often be weeded out too early in conventional programs.

### **Transparency regarding anonymization and partial randomization**

The FWF will communicate its selection mechanisms more clearly. The aim is to clearly explain the purpose, timing, and limits of anonymization and partial randomization.

The use of randomization remains flexible and will be tailored to the competitive situation and the quality of applications. The FWF will define the criteria for its use ex-ante and report on them ex-post.

### **Decision-making procedures**

The FWF is examining how a larger pool of international reviewers can be systematically involved in the decision-making process in order to relieve the burden on the Scientific Board and better cover the full range of specialist fields.

### **Calls for proposals**

The proposal to open two calls for proposals per year instead of one will be considered. Experience from other programs shows that easing deadline peaks can have a positive impact on both the number and quality of applications. A phased introduction is planned, accompanied by a monitoring of submission volumes, success rates, processing times, and reviewer availability. Depending on the evidence, we will adjust the timing and timeframes to increase predictability for applicants and review panels.

### **Monitoring, learning, and the documentation of negative results**

In addition to traditional output indicators, project documentation will be expanded to include structured questions that highlight the characteristics of high-risk research, including methodological or conceptual obstacles, negative, non-existent or unexpected findings, course corrections, methodological innovations, and pathways for follow-up research.

Reporting efforts will be kept to a minimum, but the responses will be evaluated in aggregated form. The aim is to enable and document learning gains through productive failure.

### **Selective transfer of process innovations to other FWF programs**

The FWF will consider whether other programs could increase fairness and transparency through anonymization and/or explicit randomization among equally strong applications.

It must be taken into account that these elements have their limitations when it comes to large-scale and long-term funding programs.

### **Concluding remarks**

The FWF is convinced that, by strengthening transparency, anonymization, learning-oriented monitoring, and pragmatic flexibility, it can fulfill its role as a catalyst for bold, transformative research even more effectively. We would like to thank all applicants, members of the Scientific Board and the jury, as well as stakeholders, for their contributions and look forward to the dialog during implementation. Facilitating scientific risk-taking, making productive failure visible, and getting the best ideas off the ground at an early stage remain the FWF's goals with this program.