
Guidelines

Austrian research fund for herpetology (of the Vienna Zoo and the Austrian Herpetological Society) – **ÖFFH**

Intention

The Vienna Zoo (VZ) and the Austrian Herpetological Society (ÖGH) are sponsoring an annual fund for fundamental research in amphibians and reptiles. The funded projects will be publicized via reports in „ÖGH-Aktuell“, „Schönbrunner Tiergarten Journal“ and the respective homepage as well as through presentations at corresponding events.

Objective

The research fund supports fundamental herpetological research in all relevant herpetological disciplines in reference to Austria.

Funding goes exclusively to research projects

- i) regarding the Austrian herpetofauna **and/or**
 - ii) Austrian researcher conducting a herpetological study **and/or**
 - iii) master-, PhD-studies with herpetological focus conducted at an Austrian University.
- Only research projects that clearly focus on one or more of the above listed objectives and serve to realize these objectives will be funded.

Endowment

The Vienna Zoo (4000 Euro) and the Austrian Herpetological Society (1000 Euro) will provide a fund in the amount of 5000 Euro. The funding can be attributed to one project or apportioned between several projects. In case the budget is not fully utilized, it will enhance the fund in the subsequent year. Full and partial funding of projects is possible. Granting of funds can be omitted in case of deficient eligibility.

Fund-application and submission

- Grant proposals should be submitted in English, along with a summary in German.
- The submitted project has to be consistent with the mission and vision of the ÖGH and the VZ. The proposal has to clearly state the aims, hypothesis and methods of the study. The proposal has to include a timetable and a budget report that describes the use of funds (i.e. travel costs, expendable material, equipment purchase).
- For research projects that help to achieve an academic degree (master- or PhD studies) the proposal has to state the guiding supervisor of the study, even if the funds are only used by the applicant.
- The applicant can apply for a percentage or the total capacity of the announced funds. It is necessary to disclose personal resources and third-party funds for the submitted study.
- In case of partial funding by the ÖFFH of long-term projects, annual preliminary reports have to be submitted and additional funds after the initial support by the ÖFFH have to be reported.

- The requested equipment for the project cannot include personal gear or basic equipment (i.e. computer, backpack, tents) and has to be a necessary requirement for the proposed study.
- In terms of sustainability, the purchased equipment has to be given to a scientific institution at the end of the project. The equipment can be given to the VZ, where it will become a permanent part of the inventory. Exceptions have to be requested in advance.
- The proposal has to state if the submitted project is carried out with the approval or knowledge of the respective nature conservation authority. In research projects that catch, mark, or use transmitters or in case of sample collection for molecular or genetic data, the necessary research approval and permits are required. The proposal has to state if the research approval and permits for the respective country and species have been or will be submitted. Necessary permits have to be handed in before publication of results.
- Research proposals should not exceed 15 pages including references (Din-A4, front – Arial, size – 11, line spacing – 1.5).
Please split into the following divisions:
 - Titlepage: title, name, affiliation of the applicant, English and German Abstract (max. 1 page)
 - Introduction: current research status, how will the project and its aims contribute to the current status (max. 2 pages)
 - Material and methods including timetable
 - Detailed budget report for the proposed funding and if applicable third party funding and other available resources should be mentioned
 - Previous experience and work of the applicant
 - Literature and appendix if applicable
 - CV and publication list (max. 2 pages)

Submission modalities

Research proposals should be sent as PDF (max. 5MB) to d.preininger@zoovienna.at; t.wampula@zoovienna.at with “research proposal ÖFFH” in the subject line. Proposals can be handed in every year until September 30th for funding in the following year.

Assignment of Funding

- The proposals will be evaluated and the decision will be made by November 30th by the review committee.
- Payment of granted funding will be done on the grounds of a fund-contract between the VZ, ÖGH, and the grantee, and will be disbursed in full by December 31st of the same year.
- The grantee will sign a Memorandum of Agreement confirming they will comply with all fund related requirements to the best of their knowledge.
- The funded applicants are subject to income tax liability and responsible for all social security and tax related issues. Cost allocation and/or temporary employment will not be provided by the funding agencies.

Decision on fund assignment

- The review committee, consisting of five members of the VZ and the ÖGH will deliberate on the submitted research proposals. Committee member, Prof. Walter Hödl, will serve as the Chairperson of the review committee. If required, external referees can be recruited to evaluate the proposals.
- Priority during the review process will be put on the scientific quality and practicability of the proposed project.
- The review committee informs the applicants about the final decision and provides feedback for all applicants. Successively the committee members support the project leader during publications, public relation reports and presentations if needed (especially foreign colleagues during preparation of German reports, also see next section – publication).
- In case of research proposals submitted by a review committee member or an applicant under the supervision of or in collaboration with a committee member, the respective member will abstain from the decision making process and will be replaced by an external referee. The external referee will be recruited by the remaining review committee members.
- For the purpose of transparency, the review committee members will be announced in the course of the fund allocation and decision making process.
- The review committee members will decide with the simple majority.
- Reasons for rejection of a research proposal include any project that is incompatible with the mission and vision of the VZ and ÖGH. Funding must be reimbursed in case of emerging incidents during the project that could harm the reputation of the funding agencies.

Publication of funded project results

- The annual public announcement about granted funding for the proposed projects is presented by the chairperson and takes place during the ÖGH annual meeting.
- A brief and generally understandable introduction to the project (max 1-2 print pages; language: German) has to be submitted to “ÖGH-Aktuell” and the VZ and ÖGH homepage soon after funds have been received.
- Results, if necessary preliminary results, of the project have to be presented within two years after funding at relevant events of the VZ and/or ÖGH.
- The results of funded projects (also of academic work) should be published in peer-reviewed journals. In case of repeated rejection, a generally understandable version has to be submitted to “ÖGH-Aktuell”.
- The Vienna Zoo (Schönbrunner Tiergarten Ges.m.b.H) and the Austrian Herpetological Society (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Herpetologie) have to be mentioned as funding agencies in all published articles. In case of poster presentations, the logos of both funding agencies have to appear.

- For the VZ and ÖGH homepages, results from the study should be summarized. Also, pictures should be provided to the funding agencies which, with reference to the author can be used without restrictions.
- In case the grantee does not comply with the above proposed guidelines and does not meet the obligations, funding must be reimbursed. If the project fails or shows no results without the fault of the grantee, the reasons have to be explained in a short report in the "ÖGH Aktuell".