

Seed Funding Programme

“University of Vienna Rainforest La Gamba”

Background

A key principle of the University of Vienna’s new compensation and climate protection strategy is to focus on university-owned, science-related projects that are closely linked to research and teaching. Compensation is not viewed as a purely financial mechanism but as an integrated activity that advances knowledge, supports education, and is itself a subject of rigorous scientific scrutiny.

Within this strategy, the University of Vienna is placing particular emphasis on the “[University of Vienna Rainforest](#)” project, which is based at the [Tropical Field Station La Gamba](#) in Costa Rica. By acquiring, restoring, and safeguarding rainforest areas, the initiative both strengthens and expands research at La Gamba and contributes to the University of Vienna's CO₂ compensation efforts.

Purpose and objectives

The Seed Funding Programme aims to increase and diversify research activities by University of Vienna researchers at the Tropical Field Station La Gamba by financing short, early-stage pilot and feasibility studies. Interdisciplinarity is encouraged and receives special consideration in the evaluation process.

As seed funding, this instrument is designed to kick-start new research lines and collaborations—not to deliver full-scale research projects or long-term implementations. Funding supports scoping, method development, baseline data collection, and initial research infrastructure that enable competitive applications to national and international funders and, ideally, secure external funding. A successful seed is expected to result in clearly documented outputs (e.g., preliminary results, datasets,...) and to lead to a competitive proposal submission (e.g., FWF, EU, DFG, international foundations) within 6–12 months.

Funding details

The programme, lead by the Faculty of Life Sciences, is open to funding applications from all scientific disciplines and topics across the University of Vienna, provided they are related to research at the Tropical Field Station La Gamba. Desk-based research and other preparatory work are permitted, i.e. there is no obligation to conduct on-site work in La Gamba, but the seed funding is tied to the expectation of submitting a competitive external grant application (e.g. FWF , EU, FFG, ..).

Grant size:

- Up to €10,000 for single-discipline/individual project applications.
- Up to €20,000 for interdisciplinary cooperation projects

Project duration:

- Max. 15 months

Special bonus: An additional €5,000 is awarded upon submission of a competitive external funding application resulting from the seed project (e.g. FWF Principal Investigator Project or ESPRIT, EU collaborative or ERC grant, ...).

Call schedule:

- Call deadline: 31 May 2026
- Funding decision: Mid of June 2026
- Expected latest project start: October 2026
- Timely submission of competitive applications to national and international funding agencies is expected by May 2028

Eligibility criteria

- Senior scientists, assistant professors TT, associate professors and full professors from all disciplines and faculties/centres of the University of Vienna are eligible to apply. Continuous employment at the University of Vienna until 31 December 2031 is required.
- Academic staff with fixed-term contracts, such as postdoctoral researchers funded by third-party or global funding and lecturers and senior lecturers and private lecturers (Privatdozenten) are not eligible to apply.

Budget allocation

- The grant primarily covers consumables, travel, services and other project-related costs. Funding can be used flexibly within eligible categories.
- Salaries cannot be funded. Personnel costs are only permitted in the form of independent service contracts and work contracts.

Application and Submission

Required documents

- Proposal (up to five pages long, in English, 11pt font, 1.5 line spacing) including a project summary, objectives, relevance to La Gamba, methods/work plan, expected outcomes and targeted programme/funding agency for external funding with indicative outline for submission of grant application.

In addition, the following information must be submitted:

- Budget plan and justification
- scientific CV of the applicant(s): max. two pages each with publicly accessible link to a list of all publication and a list of major research achievements/projects
- For applications of Senior Scientists, the approval of the supervising PI or head of the respective institute/department is required

The deadline for submitting proposals is **31 May 2026**. Please submit one PDF document containing all the required information via the [submission portal](#).

Evaluation process

Administrative eligibility will be checked by Dean's office of the Faculty of Life Sciences. A panel composed of the Dean's team from the Faculty of Life Sciences and selected experts from other areas of the University of Vienna will make the funding decision.

Main evaluation criteria:

- Scientific quality and feasibility within the seed timeline and budget
- Relevance to La Gamba and potential to enable competitive external funding
- Interdisciplinarity (special consideration is given to this criterion)
- Team expertise and appropriateness of methods
- Value for money and clarity of budget

Reporting

A scientific and financial report (three pages) summarising activities, results, data generated, statement of expenditures in line with eligible cost categories, and next steps towards external funding are expected by 30 January 2028 at the latest.

If applicable, confirmation of submission to competitive funders should be sent by May 2028 (with evidence of submission). If awarded funding, grant details should be provided.

Contact Information:

For any formal or administrative enquiries about the call please email dekanat.lewi@univie.ac.at.

For any information about the scientific infrastructure and research opportunities at the Tropical Station and in La Gamba, please refer to this [website](#) or email tropenstation.botanik@univie.ac.at.