

Please note that minor adjustments are currently being made to the Tenure Track guideline.

An updated version will be available under the same link within the next weeks.

(as of 10.02.2025)

ZALF Tenure Track System

[14 December 2022]



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I. PREAMBLE

As a Leibniz Institute, ZALF actively assumes its responsibilities regarding the education and qualification of early career researchers. In addition to the targeted support for doctoral researchers and postdocs, this also includes the **development of transparent career paths** in science by providing improved planning and employment security.

Based on strategic decisions of the ZALF Executive Board, core-funded scientist positions at ZALF are either offered as fixed-term positions or as tenure track positions. As a central part of ZALF's Human Resources Strategy, the ZALF Tenure System defines pathways for scientists toward a **long-term career perspective at ZALF**. Through the recruitment and continuing qualification of female and male scientists who contribute to ZALF's research and excellence goals, the ZALF Tenure System is an essential component of ZALF's scientific quality management as well as of ZALF's plan to meet gender equality standards¹.

A scientist employed at ZALF on a fixed-term tenure track position will enter an objective, criteria-based tenure process. Referring to *"the right to remain permanently in a job"*², the term tenure corresponds to the transition to a permanent contract at ZALF following the successful completion of this process. In exceptional cases, a tenure track position may be connected to a (junior) professorship.

OBJECTIVES:

- The ZALF Tenure Track System aims to recruit particularly excellent scientists or successful scientists with essential topical and methodological expertise for ZALF by providing a guaranteed transitioning to a permanent contract subject to successful evaluation.

TARGET GROUP:

- The three ZALF Tenure Tracks are aimed at scientists in different phases of their scientific career path, ranging from outstanding early career and excellent senior scientists to experienced scientists with essential topical and methodological expertise for ZALF.
- ZALF particularly encourages applications of female scientists.
- Applications of applicants with disabilities will be given preferential consideration if equally qualified.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

- **Attractiveness:** The system offers options for continuing qualification and a mentoring tandem, support for reconciling career interests with family life (certificate *"audit berufundfamilie®"*) as well as variable options to access resources.
- **Reliability:** The system ensures a clearly defined tenure process, which provides a reliable long-term career perspective and is compatible with German academic employment law.
- **Transparency:** The system features well-documented selection and evaluation processes based on pre-defined objective indicators, a candidate-specific tenure committee, and the inclusion of independent external statements during the evaluations.
- **Flexibility:** The duration of evaluation periods depends on the individual background of the candidate. Fixed core indicators are supplemented with case-specific indicators accommodating disciplinary variability and different scopes.

¹ „Betriebsvereinbarung zur Förderung der Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern im ZALF (Gleichstellungsplan) als Bestandteil der Vereinbarung zur Umsetzung der Chancengleichheit (AVGlei)" signed on 27.10.2008 [in German]

² cf. Cambridge Dictionary: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/>

II. SPECIFICATIONS OF TENURE TRACK POSITIONS

All calls under the ZALF Tenure System are initiated and launched by the ZALF Executive Board based on ZALF's Strategic Human Resources Planning and the mid-term planning for Tenure Track positions. This plan is developed and updated during the regular Strategy Retreats of the Executive Board, the ZALF Council and the Research Commission³, specifying the number and designation of tenure track positions available each year. In accordance with ZALF's Research Strategy, the **ZALF Executive Board decides** on the number of positions to be offered via the different tenure tracks as well as the respective call type for each position. Based on suggestions of the ZALF Research Commission, the ZALF Executive Board finalizes the calls and appoints the case-specific tenure committees.

Through the case-specific combination of

- A) one of two call types,
- B) three different candidate-specific tenure tracks, and
- C) the relative weighting of three evaluation categories

the ZALF Tenure System can accommodate the diverse foci of scientific positions (Fig. 1).

A-B-C-SYSTEM FOR THE SPECIFICATION OF TENURE TRACK POSITIONS		
A – CALL TYPE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classic Call Open Topic Call 	B – TENURE TRACK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Tenure Track Fast Tenure Track Immediate Tenure Track 	C – EVALUATION CATEGORIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific Achievements Strategic Aspects Personal Suitability

Fig. 1: Specification of offered tenure track positions using the A-B-C-System

Call Types (A)

Regarding the topical scope of an offered tenure track position, ZALF distinguishes two different call types (Fig. 2):

- 1) **ZALF Classic Tenure Calls** announce positions with a clear focus on a pre-defined research topic within a specific ZALF Research Area or Platform.
- 2) **ZALF Open Topic Tenure Calls** invite applications of excellent scientists and their respective proposals for research topics complying with and complementing the ZALF research profile.

ZALF CLASSIC TENURE CALLS	ZALF OPEN TOPIC TENURE CALLS
Topical call for applications regarding scientist positions with tenure track option which <u>address a pre-defined research topic within a specific ZALF Research Area or Platform</u>	Open call for applications regarding scientist positions with tenure track option which <u>address any research topic complying with and complementing the ZALF research profile</u>

Fig. 2: Call types of the ZALF Tenure System

³ The Research Commission and the ZALF Council are internal boards with an advisory function for the Executive Board.

Tenure Tracks (B)

Aiming to recruit scientists at different points along their scientific career, ZALF offers **three different tenure tracks** with different objectives and characteristics (Fig. 3), which also account for the legal framework of the German academic employment law (WissZeitVG).

REGULAR TENURE TRACK

It is the aim of the **Regular Tenure Track** to identify and recruit very promising early career researchers approximately 1–4 years⁴ after completing their PhD⁵ and to particularly support them on the path towards scientific excellence. No age limitations apply. Regular Tenure Track positions can be offered as Classic Calls (topical) or Open Topic Calls. In selected cases, Regular Tenure Track positions may be combined with a junior professorship (depending on university) or the role of a working group leader (during Phase II).

The Regular Tenure Track consists of two evaluation phases of 2–3 years each with a midterm (Level II) and a final (Level III) evaluation (Fig. 3). Progress to Phase II and granting of tenure depends on the fulfilment of defined minimum performance indicators and individual targets (see section IV). Limitations due to the German academic employment law (WissZeitVG) can be solved via the **Partial Tenure Option** if a candidate is able to contribute >50% third-party funding to the financing of his/her position (see V).

In case of particularly outstanding performance at the Level II evaluation (**excellence pathway**), candidates may receive additional resources such as funding for a doctoral researcher, conference travels or experimental work, based on the recommendation of the Tenure Committee and subject to a strategic decision of the ZALF Executive Board.

FAST TENURE TRACK

By means of **Fast Tenure Track** positions, ZALF aims to recruit more experienced scientists with a specific topical or methodological expertise which is of strategic relevance for ZALF. Positions are therefore typically offered via Classic Calls. No age limitations apply.

The Fast Tenure Track only comprises one evaluation phase (typically 2–3 years) with tenure being granted following a successful Level III evaluation (Fig. 3). Excellent performance may be rewarded with additional resources (**excellence pathway**), based on the recommendation of the Tenure Committee and subject to a strategic decision of the ZALF Executive Board.

IMMEDIATE TENURE TRACK

Immediate Tenure Track positions are restricted to the **recruitment of particularly excellent scientists** with an outstanding record and high international visibility (Fig. 3). These positions are generally combined with a customized offer regarding additional resources (e.g. staff, funding, infrastructure) and typically designed as Classic Calls with a specific customized profile. No age limitations apply.

⁴ All legally defined intermissions [§ 2 Abs. 5 WissZeitVG], such as leave of absence or reduced working time due to maternity leave, child care, military or civilian service, etc. will not be counted towards this period.

⁵ At the time of application, the PhD thesis must have been submitted. Before any contract can be signed, all final exams must be successfully completed (if applicable), and at least a preliminary certificate with the final grading supplied.

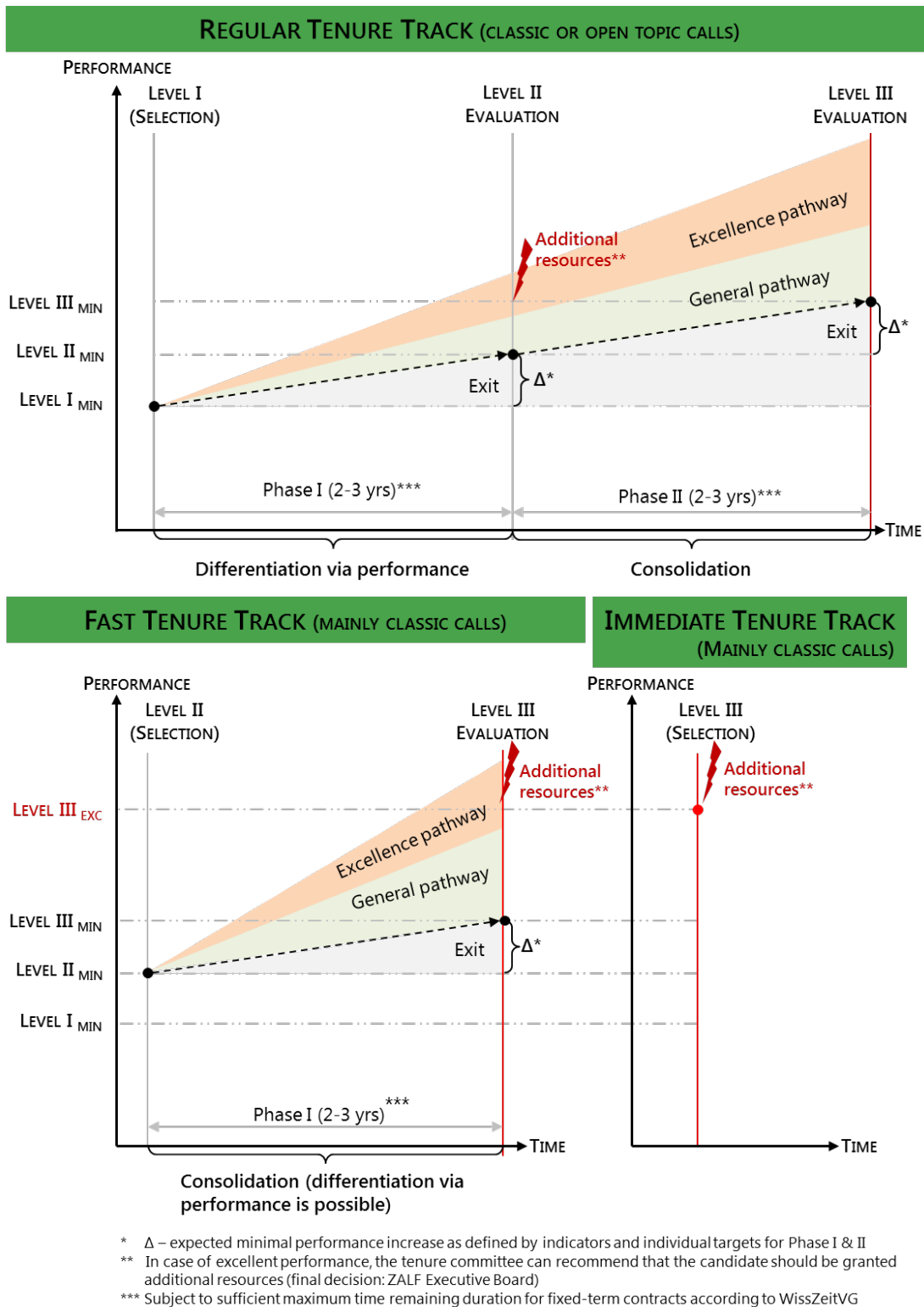


Fig. 3: Scheme of the Regular (upper), Fast (lower left) and Immediate (lower right) Tenure Tracks

Evaluation Categories (C)

To accommodate the differing scopes of the offered tenure track positions, the ZALF Tenure Track Systems applies a **weighted combination of three evaluation categories** to select suitable candidates for the issued tenure calls:

- 1) **Scientific Achievements** (quantitative indicators; weighting 30-70%)
- 2) **Strategic Aspects** (qualitative evaluation; weighting 20-50%)
- 3) **Personal Suitability** (qualitative evaluation; weighting 10-20%)

Through the relative weighting of these three categories, different characteristics of and thus requirements for scientific positions can be accommodated. For example, scientific achievements will be most important for immediate tenure track positions aiming to recruit excellent scientists, while strategic aspects may receive more weight when a scientist with a particular essential methodological expertise is to be recruited.

The case-specific relative weighting of each category is suggested by the scientist responsible for the respective Tenure Track call and is discussed and defined by the Research Commission and confirmed by the Executive Board. Details on these categories and the respective indicators can be found in Appendix 1.

III. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Main protagonists

- Scientific Director
- Executive Board
- Research Commission
- Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)
- Case-specific Tenure Committee

Call preparation and announcement

ZALF organizes **regular annual tenure track calls** offering at least one position per year, typically during the 1st quarter. In addition, on-demand calls can be initiated by the Executive Board. For each call, the Executive Board decides on the respective call type and finalizes the calls in consultation with the Scientific Advisory Board and the Research Commission. All calls are announced internationally for ≥ 4 -6 weeks.

Appointment of Tenure Committee

Based on the recommendation of the Research Commission, a **case-specific Tenure Committee** is appointed for each call, which conducts the candidate selection process and all subsequent evaluations for the respective tenure position until either tenure is granted or the tenure process is abandoned. Each Tenure Committee consists of 7 full members and 1-2 advising members (Table 1) and is chaired by a member of the directorate (without vote).

Candidate ranking and selection

The applicant selection process is conducted by case-specific Tenure Committees according to ZALF's General Hiring Standards and supported by the Directorate and the Human Resources Department. During the 1st round of evaluation, all formally eligible applicants⁶ will be considered based on the required application documents specified in Appendices 3 and 4 and the position-specific requirements regarding the three evaluation categories. During this evaluation round, a number of suitable candidates is selected and invited for interviews⁷. For immediate tenure track positions, applicants have to give an oral presentation as part of the interview and 2 independent external written evaluation statements (≥ 1 international evaluator) will be obtained.

Following the interviews, the Tenure Committee will recommend a final candidate ranking to the Scientific Director, who then decides on the candidate(s) with whom contract negotiations will be initiated. ZALF aims to complete the candidate selection process in 3–4 months.

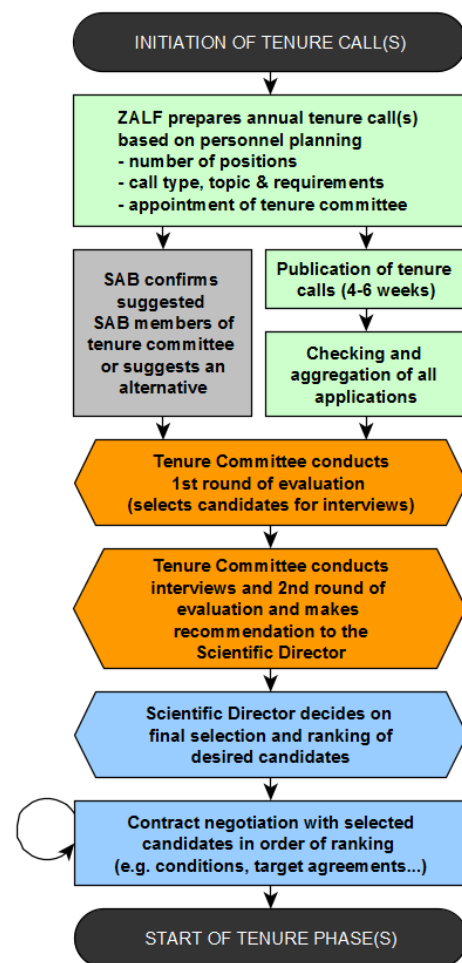


Fig. 4: Process overview – from call initiation to the start of the tenure phase

⁶ i.e. all candidates with complete application documents, a completed PhD degree (PhD thesis must have at least been submitted prior to the application) and fulfilling all requirements formulated in the respective call

⁷ Accounting for the „Betriebsvereinbarung zur Förderung der Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern im ZALF (Gleichstellungsplan) als Bestandteil der Vereinbarung zur Umsetzung der Chancengleichheit (AVGlei)“ [in German]

Contract negotiations

In order of ranking, contract negotiations with the preferred candidate will be conducted by the Executive Board. During these negotiations, general contract conditions, individual target agreements (e.g. for the respective tenure phase, additional performance indicators other than the core indicators, necessary resources, etc.) as well as potential additional resources in case of outstanding performance (excellence pathway) will be discussed and agreed upon.

Table 1: Composition of case-specific Tenure Committees

Members	Represented Group / Function
4	Representatives of the Co-Heads of the Research Areas or Research Platform and the Working Group Leaders (in selected cases, one senior scientist with a particular expertise related to the call may be appointed to the committee)
2	Members of the Scientific Advisory Board or one external scientist
1	Equal Opportunities Officer
1	Member of the Works' Council (advisory function)
(1)	Representative body for disabled employees (where applicable; advisory function)

IV. EVALUATIONS ALONG THE TENURE TRACK

Evaluation Levels

After being appointed to a tenure track position, candidates will be evaluated twice (Regular Tenure Track; Level II & III) or once (Fast Tenure Track; Level III) before tenure is finally granted (Fig. 3). For Immediate Tenure Track positions, the candidate selection process is identical with the final tenure evaluation (Level III).

All evaluations are conducted by the case-specific Tenure Committee according to the weighted evaluation categories, the respective criteria with level-specific thresholds (see below) plus individual targets defined in the negotiated target agreements. For details see Appendix 5.

Evaluations are based on the following documents and information:

- Self-report of the candidate (for template see Appendix 6) regarding
 - > the core performance indicators (see below)
 - > any additional defined performance targets defined in the individual target agreement
- Oral presentation of the candidate

The Tenure Committee determines whether the objectives have been achieved and issues a decision proposal for the Scientific Director, which makes the final decision regarding each individual tenure case. If the defined thresholds (core indicators) and other individually agreed performance targets are met, progress to the subsequent phase or granting of tenure is guaranteed. If a candidate's performance falls just short of the defined thresholds and targets, the Tenure Committee may recommend and the Executive Board may decide to grant access to the subsequent tenure phase or tenure on strategic grounds and considering a candidate's individual circumstances (e.g. challenges, family responsibilities, etc.).

In case of outstanding performance at the Level II or III evaluation (**excellence pathway**), candidates may receive additional resources such as funding for a doctoral researcher, conference travels or experimental work, based on the recommendation of the Tenure Committee and subject to the final strategic decision of the Executive Board.

Performance Evaluation & Indicators

In each of the **three weighted evaluation categories** (cf. Section II C p. 6), different quantitative (Scientific Achievements) and qualitative (Strategic Aspects, Personal Suitability) indicators are considered during initial candidate selection as well as all tenure evaluations.

SCIENTIFIC PERFORMANCE (WEIGHTING 30-70%)

Overall, the scientific performance indicators represent the six dimensions of the research process (Fig. 5), with one or more quantitative indicators per dimension.

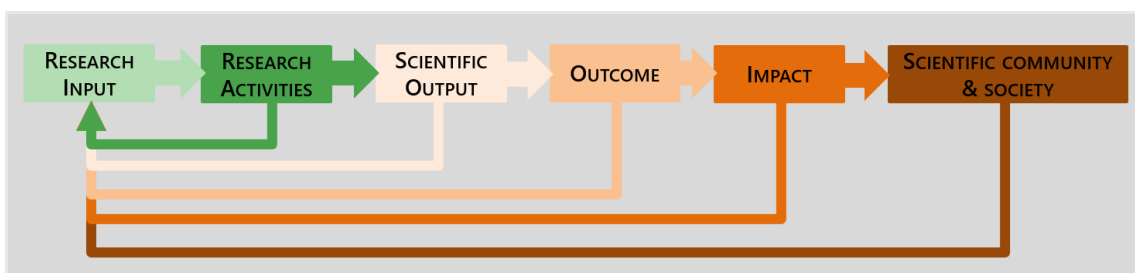


Fig. 5: The six dimensions of the research process represented by the scientific evaluation criteria

Out of these indicators, **three core indicators** have been defined, which are applicable to all candidates across all disciplines, cannot be substituted and feature defined thresholds giving an orientation regarding the expected performance at each evaluation level (Table 2).

Table 2: Overview of scientific core indicators and the respective thresholds by evaluation level

Core Indicator ⁸	Level I _{MIN}	Level II _{MIN}	Level III	
			Level III _{MIN}	Level III _{EXC}
Acquired third-party funding (average of the last 3 years) ⁹	active participation	funding for 2-3 PhD positions (each ≥3 yrs.) or equivalent	funding for 2 postdocs and 2 PhD positions (each ≥3 yrs.) or equivalent	funding for >2 postdocs and >2 PhD positions (each ≥3 yrs.) or equivalent
Total number of peer-reviewed publications	3-5 publ. overall	3 publ./yr.	5 publ./yr.	>5 high-impact ¹⁰ publ./yr.
Average number of publications as 1 st , 2 nd or corresponding author since date of first publication or PhD degree	2 publ. overall	avg. ~1,0 publ./yr.	avg. ~1-1,2 publ./yr.	avg. >1,2 high-impact ¹⁰ publ./yr.
Applicable to	Initial selection for Regular Tenure Track	Initial selection for Fast & Midterm evaluation for Regular Tenure Track	Final tenure evaluation for Regular & Fast Tenure Track	Initial selection for Immediate Tenure Track

All **other indicators** (Appendix 1) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, i.e. as specified in the respective initial tenure call and individual target agreements. The thresholds listed for these indicators indicate rough expectations which can be varied according to disciplinary background, scope of the position, etc.

⁸ All provided indicator values per year are applicable to full-time positions (100% FTE) and will be corrected accordingly for part-time positions.

⁹ Active participation in acquiring third-party funding can be demonstrated by project approval letters or – in case of shared principal leadership – by means of a reference letter of the listed PI.

¹⁰ TOP25% (Q1) journals in a given subject category (ISI Journal Citation Report)

STRATEGIC ASPECTS (WEIGHTING 20-50%)

In this category, evaluation is based on qualitative internal (by the respective Co-Heads of Research Area or Platform) and 1-2 independent external evaluation statements, assessing

- the contribution of the candidate's research concept to ZALF's research strategy and its integration potential with ongoing ZALF research
- the originality and innovation potential of the research profile and the applied methods
- the national and international collaborative potential of the research concept

PERSONAL SUITABILITY (WEIGHTING 10-20%)

Evaluation in this category will rely on qualitative internal or external expertise to evaluate the following aspects based on a self-report of the candidate:

- Individual commitment to further professional development
- International research experience
- National and international collaboration
- Leadership skills (if tenure position is combined with position of working group leader)

V. CONTRACTUAL ASPECTS

Contract Type and Salary

Tenure contracts are generally offered as full-time contracts, with part-time option to allow for the reconciliation of family and career. Salary will follow the guidelines for public employees according to the TV-L, depending on the position and the personal situation up to the level of 14 TV-L.

Contract Duration

In general, tenure contracts are based on specific scientific qualification objectives agreed upon with the respective tenure candidate. Depending on the tenure track and the specific contract history of individual candidates, however, the number and duration of contracts and the legal contractual basis can differ considerably (Table 3). In particular, the applicant-specific **maximum remaining duration for fixed-term contracts for qualification** (RFT_{max}) according to the German academic employment law (WissZeitVG) is of major importance in determining the options available regarding contract type and duration. Details on calculating RFT_{max} are given in Appendix 2.

The **Regular Tenure Track** consists of two phases, i.e. two separate consecutive contracts, with transitioning from Phase I to Phase II depending on a successful midterm evaluation. Depending on RFT_{max} , contract duration will be 2–3 years. For each contract, a scientific qualification objective needs to be identified and specified in the target agreement to comply with WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 1. In cases where individual RFT_{max} is less than 4 years but a candidate has successfully obtained third-party funding for his/her own position, the candidate can be hired via the **Partial Tenure Option** (see next section).

The **Fast Tenure Track** consists of a single fixed-term contract, typically for 2–3 years. Depending on individual employment history and RFT_{max} , the legal basis can be either WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 1 or TzBfG. If the contract is based on WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 1, one or more scientific qualification objectives must be identified and specified in the target agreement. In case of the **Immediate Tenure Track**, the candidate will receive a permanent contract according to TV-L.

Table 3: Overview of contractual options depending on tenure track and RFT_{max}

Tenure Track	RFT _{max}	Contract duration	Legal Basis
Regular Tenure Track	≥6 yrs.	2 fixed-term contracts of 3 years each	WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 1 for further scientific qualification (the qualification target will be specified in a target agreement as an official appendix to the work contract)
	≥4–6 yrs.	2 fixed-term contracts of RFT _{max} /2 each	
	<4 yrs.	2 fixed-term contracts of 2–3 years each	refer to → Partial Tenure Option (see below)
Fast Tenure Track	≥2 to ≤3 yrs.	1 fixed-term contract of RFT _{max} (2–3 yrs.)	WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 1 for further scientific qualification (the qualification target will be specified in a target agreement as an official appendix to the work contract)
	2 yrs.	1 fixed-term contract of 2 years	“sachgrundlose Befristung” according to TzBfG (precluding previous ZALF employment)
Immediate Tenure Track	not relevant	Permanent contract	TV-L

Partial Tenure Option

For candidates, who cannot be employed on a regular tenure track position based on WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 1 due to insufficient RFT_{max}, ZALF offers a **Partial Tenure Option**. Eligible candidates must have successfully obtained third-party funding for their own position for 2–3 years.

As a special option of the Regular Tenure Track, the Partial Tenure Option also consists of two phases (Fig. 6), i.e. two separate consecutive contracts, with transitioning from Phase I to Phase II depending on a successful midterm evaluation.

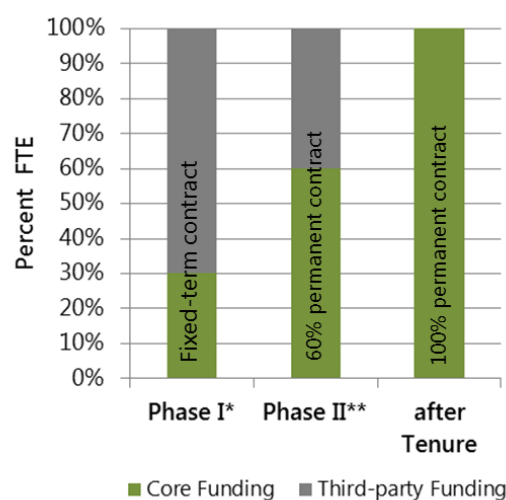


Fig. 6: Contract financing for Partial Tenure Option

Phase I: The 1st contract will be based on WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 2, with 51–70% financed via the third-party project of the candidate. During this phase, ZALF will supplement the contract with 30% co-financing from core funding.

Phase II – Partial Tenure: Following the successful midterm evaluation (Level II), the candidate will receive a regular permanent core-funded contract (TV-L) with 60% of the regular working time. The candidate can supplement this contract with up to 40% of third-party funding (optional). If the midterm evaluation is unsuccessful, the candidate can either transition to other third-party funded contracts or leave for a different institution.

Full Tenure: After 3 years in Phase II, the candidate will be evaluated (Level III), identical to the Regular Tenure Track. If this final evaluation is successful, the permanent contract will be increased from 60% to 100% of the regular working time. In case of an unsuccessful evaluation, the candidate has the right to remain on a 60% permanent core-funded contract, with the option of supplementing this contract with acquired third-party funding.

VI. SUPPORT

Reconciliation of Family and Career

In compliance with the German academic employment law, the duration of any tenure contract based on WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 1 (i.e. with defined qualification objectives) will be extended by the duration of legally defined intermissions if the candidate agrees. Such intermissions are, e.g.,

- Leave of absence or reduced working time (by at least 20%) for supervision or care of a child under the age of 18 years or care of a family member
- Maternity leave, employment ban during pregnancy as well as parental leave according to the "Bundeselterngeldgesetz" and the "Elternzeitgesetz"
- Any times of absence from work due to illness exceeding the legal or tariff-based entitlement to continued remuneration

For the defined cases, there is a legal entitlement to a respective contract extension. For more details on these and other intermissions and their maximum accountable length, please refer to Appendix 2 and § 2 Abs. 5 WissZeitVG. The defined intermissions must also not be considered during the calculation of RFT_{max} . **Note:** These regulations do not apply to contracts based on WissZeitVG §2 Abs. 2 (i.e. Phase I under the Partial Tenure Option).

The legally defined intermissions are also excluded when calculating quantitative scientific performance indicators such as the average number of publications since the date of the first publication (or the year the PhD degree was awarded¹¹). In this case, for example, the period since the date of the first publication will be reduced by the duration of legally defined intermissions.

ZALF is certified under the "*audit berufundfamilie®*", acknowledging its continuous efforts to improve family-conscious personnel policy. Family aspects are therefore also considered during the calculation of the maximum remaining duration for fixed-term contracts for qualification RFT_{max} . Although not a mandatory legal entitlement, ZALF also commits itself to consider a legally defined extension of 2 years per child under the age of 18 years and in case of a disability or a severe chronic disease of the applicant when determining RFT_{max} . For details please refer to Appendix 2 and § 2 Abs. 1 S. 4–6 WissZeitVG.

In addition, ZALF offers a wide range of measures for reconciling career interests with family life to all of its employees – including tenure track candidates – e.g. flexible working hours and work places, family-conscious event organisation, arrangement of local child care, and external advisory services for its employees and their families.

Mentoring

Networks are particularly relevant when striving for excellence in science. In order to support its tenure candidates during the consolidation and expansion of their professional networks, a **Mentoring Tandem** is part of all regular and fast tenure track positions. All regular and fast tenure track candidates are therefore invited to select a ZALF-external mentor for the duration of their tenure phase. Candidates may receive formal support from ZALF in making the initial contact and obtaining the commitment of their mentor. ZALF supports the tandems by providing travel funds to facilitate annual meetings between mentee and mentor. With respect to ZALF-internal regulations, candidates are supported by their respective ZALF-internal supervisor and central administrative staff.

¹¹ whichever yields the higher performance value (i.e. if the 1st publication was already published during master studies, followed by a publication "break" until the end of the PhD phase)

Continuing qualification

Tenure candidates have access to all regular support measures available under the ZALF strategy for personnel development. This includes (co-)financing of trainings and courses, both in-house and external. Particular emphasis is paid to the development of soft skills like communication and conflict management, leadership, project management and basics of business administration, trainings on academic writing and publishing are also supported.

Beyond these, other measures tailored to the individual needs for career development are supported which are assessed during the yearly discussion with supervisors and discussions on target agreements between tenure track phases.

Resources

In most cases, tenure candidates will be part of a ZALF working group. Through this working group, candidates will have access to some basic core funding, to performance-based funding as well as to infrastructure (e.g. office, laboratories, and technical support). Additional infrastructure and technical support for strategic activities is also available through the Research Areas or Platforms.

Candidates on tenure positions which are associated with leading a ZALF working group will have regular access to basic and performance-based funding (like all other working groups) and will be involved in the budgeting of infrastructural investments at the level of ZALF Research Areas or Research Platform. For tenure positions associated with a junior professorship, additional resources will depend on negotiations with the respective university.

In case of outstanding performance at the Level II or III evaluation (excellence pathway), candidates may receive additional resources such as funding for a doctoral researcher, conference travels or experimental work, based on the recommendation of the Tenure Committee and subject to the final strategic decision of the Executive Board.

VII. RATIFICATION AND VALIDITY

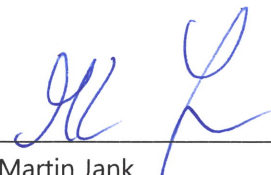
This is the third revised version of the original guideline signed on 01.02.2018. This document and previous versions have been discussed in several meetings of the ZALF Council, the ZALF research strategy group, the Scientific Advisory Board and the ZALF Assembly of Members. The document has also been presented to the Works Council, the Equal Opportunities Officer and the Postdoc representatives for discussion and comments.

The ZALF Tenure Track System was officially approved by the ZALF Executive Board on 30.01.2018. This revision became effective with the approval of the Executive Board on 14.12.2022. The document is valid until a new version becomes effective or until formally terminated by the Executive Board.

Müncheberg, 17.01.2023



Prof. Dr. Frank A. Ewert
Scientific Director



Martin Jank
Administrative Director

Appendix 1 – Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators

Table 4: Overview of quantitative¹² and qualitative indicators and the respective thresholds or ranges by evaluation level (core indicators highlighted)

Evaluation Category	Dimension	Indicator	Level I Minimum	Level II Minimum	Level III	
					Minimum	Excellence
Scientific Achievements	Input	Individual excellence grants (i.e. ERC, Emmy-Noether, A.-v.-Humboldt, etc.)	—	—	—	desired
		Acquired third-party funding as principal investigator (PI or Co-PI) (average of the last 3 years) ¹³	active participation ¹¹	funding for 2-3 PhD positions (each ≥3 yrs.) or equivalent	funding for 2 postdocs and 2 PhD positions (each ≥3 yrs.) or equivalent	funding for >2 postdocs and >2 PhD positions (each ≥3 yrs.) or equivalent
	Research activity	Coordination of large international and national joint projects as PI	—	—	desired	1 project
		Successful (co-)supervision of doctoral researchers and graduate students (completed PhD theses)	—	desired	2-3 PhD overall	~1 PhD/yr.
	Output	Total number of peer-reviewed publications in WoS/Scopus-listed scientific journals	3-5 publ. overall	3 publ./yr.	5 publ./yr.	>5 high-impact ¹⁴ publ./yr.
		Average number of publications as 1 st , 2 nd or corresponding author since date of first publication or PhD degree	2 publ. overall	avg. ~1,0 publ./yr.	avg. ~1-1,2 publ./yr.	avg. >1,2 high-impact ¹⁴ publ./yr.
		Individual h-index	~3-4	~10-15	~15-20	≥30
		List of most cited and/or most relevant publications	—	provide top 3	provide top 5	provide top 10
	Outcome	Invited keynote lectures and plenary talks at international conferences	desired	2-3 overall	~1/yr.	~2/yr.
	Impact	Self-report on transfer activities and societal impact	envisaged	desired	required	required
		Political consultation, transfer and membership(s) in political bodies or boards	—	—	—	required
	Services to academic community & society	Active membership(s) in Editorial Boards of high impact journals ¹⁴	—	envisaged	desired	required
		Appointed/elected membership(s) in scientific bodies, evaluation committees, and boards of scientific organizations	—	envisaged	desired	required
Strategic Aspects	—	Assessment of strategic aspects, e.g. contribution to ZALF's research strategy as well as originality, innovation and collaborative potential of the research concept	Qualitative evaluation			
Personal Suitability	—	Assessment of a candidate's personal suitability, e.g. commitment to professional development, international research experience & networking, and leadership skills	Qualitative evaluation			

¹² All provided indicator values per year are applicable to full-time positions (100% FTE) and will be corrected accordingly for part-time positions.

¹³ Active participation in acquiring third-party funding can be demonstrated by the project approval letters or – in case of shared leadership – by means of a reference letter of the listed PI. Please refer to Appendix 3 for specifications on required information.

¹⁴ TOP25% (Q1) journals in a given subject category (WoS Journal Citation Report)

Appendix 2 – Legal Basis for Contract Duration

Calculation of the applicant-specific maximum remaining duration for fixed-term contracts

The applicant-specific maximum remaining duration for fixed-term contracts (RFT_{\max}) according to German academic employment law (WissZeitVG) can be roughly¹⁵ calculated as follows:

$$RFT_{\max} = (6\text{-yr-BASE}_{\text{postdoc}} + \text{BONUS}_{\text{pre-PhD}} + \text{EXT}_{\text{opt}}) - (\text{EMPLOY}_{\text{post-PhD}} \text{ excluding } \text{INT}_{\text{def}})$$

6-yr-BASE_{postdoc}	Maximum allowable duration of fixed-term contracts since PhD degree was awarded (date on PhD certificate) [for details see § 2 Abs. 1 Satz 2 WissZeitVG]
BONUS_{pre-PhD}	Difference between time needed for obtaining the PhD degree (incl. all times with and without contracts, scholarships, etc. both in Germany and abroad) and the maximum allowable duration of 6 years for the PhD phase (i.e. accounting for fast PhD completion) [for details see § 2 Abs. 1 Satz 2 WissZeitVG]
EXT_{opt}	Legally defined extension of the maximum allowable duration of fixed term contracts since the PhD degree was awarded <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) 2 years per child under the age of 18 years [for details see § 2 Abs. 1 S. 4 & 5 WissZeitVG]b) 2 years in case of a disability according to § 2 Abs. 1 SGB IX or a severe chronic disease of the applicant [for details see § 2 Abs. 1 S. 6 WissZeitVG]
EMPLOY_{post-PhD}	Total duration of <u>all</u> fixed-term contracts (irrespective of funding and legal basis) with >25% of regular monthly working time at a German university or public non-university research institution since PhD degree was awarded [for details see § 2 Abs. 3 WissZeitVG]
INT_{def}	Total duration of <u>all</u> legally defined intermissions [for details see § 2 Abs. 5 WissZeitVG] <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Leave of absence or reduced working time (by at least 20%) for supervision or care of a child under the age of 18 years or care of a family member – up to a maximum of 2 yearsb) Leave of absence for scientific or artistic work, training or education outside of the academic sector or outside of Germany – up to a maximum of 2 yearsc) Maternity leave, employment ban during pregnancy as well as parental leave according to the “Bundeselterngeldgesetz” and the “Elternzeitgesetz” – to the extent of the period without any employmentd) Basic military service and civilian servicee) Special leave (by at least 20%) for activities in the works council, the representative body for disabled employees or as equal opportunity officer for a political office (i.e. in parliament) – up to a maximum of 2 yearsf) Any times of absence from work due to illness exceeding the legal or tariff-based entitlement to continued remuneration

¹⁵ A legally reliable calculation can only be done by the ZALF Human Resources Department based on the information submitted by the applicant (e.g. CV and other relevant documents)

Appendix 3 – Guideline on Application Documents

Required application documents

In order to be considered, your application must include the following documents:

1. **Application letter** (max. 2 pages) describing your main research achievements and your scientific goal(s)
2. **Summary of your future research plan** (max. 2 pages) regarding the research area described in the call
3. **Comprehensive Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)** according to the specifications listed below
4. **List of peer-reviewed publications** according to the specifications listed below
5. **List of acquired third-party funding** according to the specifications listed below
6. **Certificates and proof of qualifications** (e.g., PhD, Master, Bachelor, etc.)
7. **2 standardized letters of recommendation** (see Appendix 4 for template; available at www.zalf.de/en/karriere/tenure-track/) of scientists who are familiar with your research accomplishments and academic credentials

Specifications regarding your C.V.

In preparing your C.V., we strongly recommend that you consider the following aspects in order for indicators to be correctly assessed based on your application documents:

- Provide **up-to-date contact information** to allow for the clarification of questions
- Provide your continuous employment history with **monthly resolution**
- Clearly identify **part-time positions** (% full-time equivalent), parental and other **leave**, as well as periods with work contracts outside scientific institutions
- Optional: number of children (voluntary information)
- Provide your educational background including all university degrees
- Provide a well-structured overview of all other scientific achievements, including i) awards or fellowships, ii) invited talks, iii) memberships in editorial boards or scientific organisations, iv) teaching experience, v) supervision of (under)graduate students, vi) reviewing activities, etc.

Specifications regarding your list of publications

Your list of publications should:

- **Separately** list i) peer-reviewed Web of Science (WoS)/Scopus-listed publications and ii) other publications (books, monographs, contributions to proceedings, etc.)
- Be sorted in **chronological** order, starting with the most recent publication
- Highlight your name in the list of authors **in bold**
- Highlight your **3 most important** papers
- Include your current Web of Science **h-index**

Ideally, you also provide an ORCID iD or a link to a Web of Science, Scopus or Google Scholar webpage where your entire publication record is summarised.

Specifications regarding your list of acquired third-party funding

Your list of acquired third-party funding should be structured like the following table:

Acquired funding	Funding agency	Project duration	Project title (incl. link to project webpage, if applicable)	Your role in this project
...
...
...

- **Acquired funding:** please specify the amount of acquired third-party funding in € (total project volume if you were the Principal Investigator OR volume of the work package you were responsible for)
- **Funding agency:** full name of the funding agency
- **Project duration:** please specify the duration of the project incl. months and years (MON/YYYY-MON/YYYY)
- **Project title:** please specify the title of the third-party project incl. a link to the project webpage, if applicable
- **Your role in this project:** please specify the your contribution to this project proposal (e.g., Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator, Leader of Work Package, Co-Leader of Work Package, ...)

Appendix 4 – Standardized Letter of Reference (Template)

This template is available for download at: www.zalf.de/en/karriere/tenure-track/

The Letter of Reference can either be submitted by the applicant as part of the application package or submitted directly by the Reviewer (with reference to the call and the applicant).

General Information

The ZALF Tenure Track System offers reliable and transparent pathways towards a long-term career perspective to outstanding scientists. The applicant selection and ranking process is conducted by a case-specific ZALF Tenure Committee which makes a recommendation to the Scientific Director. In addition to the usual application documents (e.g., CV, certificates, list of publications and acquired third-party funds, etc.), each tenure track applicant must submit **two independent standardized letters of reference**. Your willingness to provide such a reference letter is highly appreciated by ZALF, as this is an essential mechanism of academic quality assurance and forms an import basis for the final recommendation of the Tenure Committee.

Reference provided for: NAME OF THE APPLICANT

Information on the Referee:

Name: Name of the referee

Institution: Institution of the referee

Position: Position of the referee

Address: Address of the referee

1. Since when and in which context have you known the applicant? [max. 800 char.]
Enter your answer here
2. According to your experience, the applicant is among the best doctoral students/postdoctoral researchers [in %]:
☐ Top 5 % ☐ Top 10 % ☐ Top 25 % ☐ Top 50 % ☐ No assessment possible
3. In your opinion, the applicant's academic potential is:
☐ Outstanding ☐ High ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ No assessment possible
4. In your opinion, the applicant's international research network is:
☐ Excellent ☐ Very good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ No assessment possible

5. In your opinion, the applicant's commitment to his/her further scientific career development is:

☐ Outstanding ☐ High ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ No assessment possible

6. Please describe how the applicant stands out in terms of academic achievements [max. 1200 char.]:

Enter your answer here

7. Please provide any additional information that could be of importance for this application procedure [max. 1200 char.]:

Enter your answer here

8. Your overall recommendation of the applicant

☐ Strongly recommended ☐ Recommended ☐ Recommended with limitations

Place, Date

Signature of the Referee

Appendix 5 – Tenure Track Evaluation Procedure

TIMING OF THE EVALUATION:

- In order to maximize the period of performance in the interest of the candidates while at the same time ensuring enough time for the formalities of contract extension in case of successful evaluation, the evaluation is typically carried out in the 3rd month before the end of the respective tenure phase.
- At the beginning of the last year of the tenure phase, the candidates will be informed by the directorate about the timeline and necessary steps (e.g. notification to the employment agency at least 3 months before the expiration of their employment contract).
- If the candidate foresees or is sure that he/she has already reached the agreed tenure targets, the tenure evaluation can be conducted earlier in consultation with the responsible staff in the Directorate.

INVOLVEMENT:

- The evaluation is carried out by the respective **Tenure Committee (TC)** of the original tenure call and is organized and accompanied by the **responsible staff in the Directorate**. In individual cases, it may be necessary to replace individual TC members (i.e. due to retirement, etc.). This will be done in coordination with the Research Commission approximately 3 months before the planned evaluation.
- If not already part of the TC, **one of the respective Co-Heads of the RA/RDS and the WG leader** of the tenure candidate are to take part in the evaluation.
- In order to ensure an efficient evaluation, the **Scientific Director** is to be involved in the scheduling, preparation and implementation of the evaluation. Ideally, he will take part in the evaluation. If necessary, the Scientific Director may decide based on the preparatory documents whether his personal participation in the evaluation is necessary or not.

EVALUATION DOCUMENTS:

- The evaluation is based on the respective **Tenure Agreement** (official attachment of the work contract) and the candidate's performance report for the corresponding tenure phase.
- The **performance report** of the candidates (see Appendix 6 for the template) contains a presentation of the quantitative achievements and a report on the qualitative goals. With respect to publications, third-party funding and the supervision of early career researchers, the candidate will receive a tabular excerpt from the internal performance database from the responsible staff in the Directorate (with the assistance of the library, funding management and junior researcher coordination).
- Timeline:
 - Approx. 9 months before the end of the tenure phase, **the evaluation date will be fixed** in agreement with the candidate and the tenure committee.
 - **The deadline for the excerpt from the internal performance database** is 1 month before the report is due; in order to early-on provide a basis for the report. Additional achievements between this deadline and the final deadline of the report (see below) can be manually added to the list.
 - **The final deadline for achievements** to be included in the written report is the last day before the start of the 3rd monthly period before the contractual end of the respective tenure phase (e.g., Jan. 14 if the tenure phase expires on April 15).
 - **Submission deadline:** the report must be submitted by the candidate at least 10 days before the evaluation date.

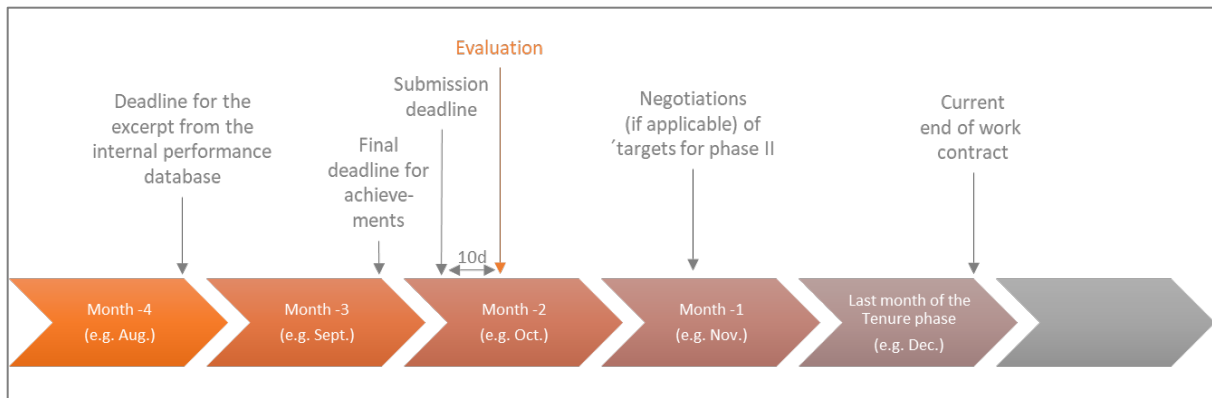


Fig. 7: The timeline and deadline of the tenure track evaluation

EVALUATION PROCEDURE:

- Preparation: The members of the TC and the Scientific Director will receive all necessary documents at least 1 week before the date of the evaluation.
- Evaluation meeting:
 - The evaluation takes place as a **joint meeting of the TC and the Scientific Director** (optional) **with the candidate**. The meeting lasts approx. 1.5-2 h, with the candidate only being present during the first hour.
 - The meeting starts with a **15-20 min presentation** by the candidate focusing on the scientific results of the tenure phase (part 1 of the tenure agreement) and other high-lights, if applicable. No outlook on the period after the tenure phase is to be given. Afterwards, the TC can question and discuss with the candidate (max. 40 min).
 - In the following closed part of the meeting (without the candidate), the degree to which the tenure targets have been achieved and any disputed points are discussed. Any future plans of the candidate must not play a role in this discussion.
 - Finally, the TC determines whether the tenure targets have been met and, based on this, issues a statement regarding progress to the subsequent phase or granting of tenure. If the goals have been exceeded considerably, the TC may recommend to award additional resources to the candidate (*Excellence Pathway*).
 - Ideally, the Scientific Director is present and can thus immediately **finalize the evaluation result** (decision regarding progress to the subsequent phase or granting of tenure). If the Scientific Director is not present, his formal confirmation of the evaluation result must be obtained immediately.
- In critical cases (e.g. in the event of small deviation from the targets, difficulties during the tenure phase, etc.) or in the event of an *Excellence Pathway* recommendation of the TC, the decision on how to proceed rests with the Executive Board. In these cases, a formal decision of the Executive Board should be made as soon as possible.
- The candidate is to be informed about the evaluation result as soon as possible; first verbally (if necessary also by telephone) by the chair of the TC (typically the respective head of the RA/RDS) and/or the Scientific Director. After the final decision, the candidate must receive a written notice of the evaluation result, including the respective rationale. In case of a negative evaluation result, the handling of ongoing research projects and doctoral supervision agreements beyond the end of the tenure contract will be discussed in a follow-up meeting with the candidate.

AFTER THE EVALUATION:

- In the case of a **positive evaluation result** – depending on the tenure track and phase – the candidate will either receive a permanent position (after information of the Human Resources Department about the evaluation result) or the candidate will negotiate a new tenure agreement for tenure phase II with the Executive Board.
 - In cases where candidates will move on to Tenure Phase II, the candidate should early-on prepare a 2-page research proposal (similar to initial application documents) for Tenure Phase II in preparation for the negotiation meeting.
 - If the evaluation result is accompanied by a recommendation for the "*Excellence Pathway*", the negotiation for additional resources will be conducted with the same people involved in the tenure negotiations (i.e. Executive Board, respective head of RA/RDS, WG leader).
- In the event of a **negative evaluation result**, the candidate's employment contract regularly expires at the end of the agreed tenure phase. Upon application, a temporary extension of the candidate's employment contract (max. of 3-6 months) may be granted by the Executive Board to allow for the transfer or finalization of ongoing tasks and projects. Details on the process can be provided by the Directorate. An extension of the employment contract financed by existing third-party funds of the candidate is possible subject to the general conditions of employment law.

Appendix 6 – Tenure Track Evaluation Report (Template)

of _____ (Tenure Candidate)

for Leibniz Centre of Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) e.V.

This report and its contents are prepared for evaluating the candidate's achievements during the Tenure Phase from _____ until _____ (X years and YY months) specified in the Tenure Agreement signed on _____

The evaluation is scheduled on _____ and will be conducted by the respective Tenure Committee composed as follows:

Representative of	Members
Representatives of the Co-Heads of the Research Areas or Platform and the Working Group Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name (Role) Name (Role) Name (Role) Name (Role)
Members of the ZALF Scientific Advisory Board or external experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name (Role) Name (Role)
Equal Opportunities Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name
Member of the Works Council (advisory function)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name
Representative body for disabled employees (where applicable; advisory function)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name

1. Scientific achievements

Relating to the qualification targets defined in the Tenure Agreement (a), the scientific and methodological achievements during the Tenure Phase should be described here [approx. 2-3 pages].

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2. Performance

Relating to the performance targets defined in the Tenure Agreement (b), the scientific performance during the Tenure Phase should be listed and explained in this section.

2.1 Core Indicators

Core Indicator	Target	Achievement
Acquired third-party funding ¹⁶	XXX,XXX € during the tenure phase	XXX,XXX € during the tenure phase
Total number of peer-reviewed publications ¹⁷	X.X per year	X.X per year
Average number of publications as 1 st , 2 nd or corresponding author	X.X per year	X.X per year

¹⁶ including funding acquired via competitive ZALF-internal calls (e.g., Integrated Priority Projects)

¹⁷ all accepted in peer-reviewed scientific journals with ZALF affiliation are considered

2.1.1. Acquired Third-party Funding

List all acquired third-party funded projects or work packages. If desired, you may highlight the most important projects in a short text below the table.

Acquired funding [€]	Funding agency	Project duration	Project title (incl. link to project webpage, if applicable)	Your role in this project
...	PI / Co-PI
...
...

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.1.2. Publications

List all publications (published, in press or accepted) during the Tenure Phase. Mark (in bold) all publications published as 1st, 2nd or corresponding author. If desired, you may highlight selected publications in a short text below the table.

Example, E. 202x. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua

Example, E. 202x. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum. Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.

Example, E. 202x. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum. Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.2 Additional Quantitative Indicators

In this table, please list all additional quantitative indicators specified in your Tenure Agreement. For each indicator, please include a short subsection with more detailed information.

Additional Indicator	Target	Achievement
Indicator 1	XXX	XXX
Indicator 2	XXX	XXX
XXX	XXX	XXX

2.2.1. Indicator 1

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.2.2. Indicator 2

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.2.3. Indicator X

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.3 Qualitative Indicators

In this section, please include a short subsection with detailed and descriptive information on the qualitative indicators (obligatory and optional) specified in your Tenure Agreement.

2.3.1. Indicator 1

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.3.2. Indicator 2

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.3.3. Indicator X

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

2.4 Additional Performance Highlights (optional)

In this optional section, you may present additional noteworthy achievements during the Tenure Phase which were not specified as targets in your Tenure Agreement (e.g., board memberships, successful transfer event, PR activities, etc.)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

3. Additional Information

In this section, please provide insights into particular challenges, unexpected difficulties and obstacles encountered during the Tenure Phase (e.g., reduced regular working time, family obligations, illnesses, etc.) which affected your performance (max. 1 pages).

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...

Müncheberg, _____
Date

Candidate Signature