VolkswagenStiftung

FAQs "Artificial Intelligence and the Society of the Future"

Eligibility of Applicants

- **Who can apply?**
  Every applicant must at least hold a PhD and must be affiliated to an academic institution (at the latest by the time when starting the research project).

- **Can partners from abroad participate in the projects?**
  Yes, collaboration with scientists working abroad is welcome. However, the leading applicant has to be based at a scientific institution in Germany.

- **Are researchers based at think tanks or private companies eligible to receive funding?**
  Grants can only be awarded to universities and research institutions, i.e. researchers in the private sector can neither apply for nor receive any funding.

- **Does a full professor have better chances than a postdoc when applying as PI?**
  No. The review panel judges all pre-proposals according to their originality, innovativeness, and feasibility.

- **Is there a minimum/maximum number of partners?**
  At least two PIs should be involved representing the interdisciplinary collaboration between social sciences/humanities and engineering sciences. Up to five PIs/teams can be involved.

- **Is it possible to be part of more than one project/working group in this call?**
  It is generally possible for one applicant to be part of two projects, irrespective of Planning Grant – or Full Grant.

- **Is it required to apply for a planning grant first or is it possible to directly apply for a full grant?**
  If you have already formed an interdisciplinary research team as required by the call and do not need an "exploration phase" you can directly apply for a full grant.

Budget

- **Which costs can be funded?**
  All costs (including partners from abroad) which are **directly related** to the project can be funded. The Foundation does not cover overhead expenses.

  Personnel expenses: for doctoral students and postdocs (positions and scholarships), student and research assistants. Average rates for academic- and non-academic staff in Germany are available here.

  Personnel expenses in other countries must be calculated according to local rates.

  Recurring non-personnel costs: e.g. travel costs, accommodation, workshops, conferences, catering, rental of rooms and technical equipment (for project meetings and workshops only), translations, transcriptions, service contracts (related to the project)

Non-recurrent expenses: e.g. printing subsidies (for publications), acquisition of data and literature, surveys, science communication

- **How should positions for PhDs and postdocs be budgeted?**
  Planning Grant: It is possible to apply for PhD positions only if the funding is guaranteed for the entire duration of the doctoral thesis (i.e. beyond the planning grant phase).

  Full Grant: In general, PhD positions should be budgeted for a minimum of three years and may be budgeted for a duration of up to four years. In the pre-proposal, it has to be explained how the junior scholars are involved in the project and how their qualification is ensured both financially and organizationally.

  Postdocs can apply for their own position.

- **Will science communication be funded?**
  Project teams may apply for funds to cover costs related to science communication measures (beyond academic output such as knowledge dissemination and public engagement activities) and stakeholder involvement in addition to the maximum amount of the grant; however, this merely relates to non-personnel expenses.

- **How should the budget be structured?**
  Planning Grant: Budget overview for the whole project (i.e. not for each PI separately). If necessary/appropriate it is possible to add a budget verification.

  Full Grant: Budget overview in tabular form separately for each PI.
  Please note: A more detailed budget is required with the full applications; shortlisted consortia will receive more detailed information at a later stage.

- **Can the budget of the pre-proposal be modified in the full proposal?**
  Yes, budget plans may be changed when submitting the full proposal. The Foundation reserves the right to adjust/adapt budget plans.

- **Which institution will administrate the grant?**
  Planning Grant: Funds will be granted to the institution of the main applicant, which will manage the budget and transfer money to the partner institutions.

  Full Grant: Each institution of the PIs/research teams involved will receive a separate grant letter and has to manage its own budget.

Application and Electronic Application System

- **In which language has the application to be submitted?**
  The application has to be submitted **in English** as the review committee will be internationally constituted.

- **How many applicants should be registered in the electronic application system?**
  Only the "coordinator" of the project should register. The partners have to be listed on the "cover sheet" of the application.

- **Does the Foundation provide templates for e.g. CVs, budget plans?**
  No, we do not provide templates.

- **Which publications should be listed in the CV?**
  Only the most relevant regarding the proposed research project.

- **Is the reference list / bibliography included in the page limit?**
  No, bibliography/references are in addition to the 3 pages (Planning Grant) or 5 pages (Full Grant) limit.

Further Information

- **Will there be a further call in 2020?**
  Yes. The respective deadlines will probably be in summer (Planning Grant) and autumn (Full Grant) 2020. The details will be published on the Foundation´s website in due time.

- **Is it possible to get a list of the projects already funded?**
  All research projects funded within this program are listed in the Foundation's [Project-Person-Search](#).