

Vademecum FSTP



**Value and Impact through Synergy, Interaction and coOperation of Networks  
of AI Excellence Centres**

GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER: 952070

Deliverable D3.1

Vademecum FSTP

# Vademecum FSTP

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### Disclaimer

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## Executive summary

This document, “Vademecum FSTP (D1.2)”, is a deliverable of the Work Package 3 “European AI Network of Excellence Centers: strengthening synergies”, Task 1.3 “Support to FSTP projects”. It collects rules, principles, directions and procedures in order to offer logistic, administrative and legal support to Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) activities. The document is addressed to Vision Partners and Network of Excellence projects and aims at being a practical guideline containing comprehensive information for managing the whole process from the very first steps to the award, signature and implementation of contract, following EU principles of openness and transparency.

The document is structured as follows:

- Section 1 states aims and objectives of the VISION project and defines the legal framework of reference;
- Section 2 describes general principles and required information in managing FSTP projects along the whole process, criteria, terms and conditions, obligations in accordance with EU principles of openness and transparency;
- Section 3 gives an overview of the items and elements to be included in the open call text (for example a description of the type of organization sought and the technology to be provided), together with a guide for applicants and the criteria for awarding the funding;
- Section 4 is focused on the selection procedure criteria and the necessary steps to evaluate and score submissions received;
- In Section 5, support activities to Vision NoE partners are summarized;
- Section 6 draws the conclusions.
- The deliverable ends with an Annex section providing various templates (application form, budget table and KPI’s, invitation letter for evaluators, evaluation matrix) which can be personalized and customized by the Vision partners with specific information, in addition to an overview of NoEs approach to FSTP: making a summary of the methodologies and procedures adopted by the Vision partners.

It is important to underline that representatives from all the four AI Network of Excellences were involved at various stage in the production of this deliverable. AI representatives were consulted through two conference calls first to understand their FSTP process and then to ask how VISION could support them, what activities would be the most useful for them and their community.

NoEs contact point were also involved in reviewing this document and providing feedback on its pre-final version. Names of the contributors are listed in the first page of this deliverable.

Finally, the organization FundingBox (<https://fundingbox.com/>) was involved both as ELISE NoEs representative and as representative for the AI4EU flagship initiative, as they manage FSTP for both projects. In this way we ensured broader alignment with the AI on demand platform initiative.

# 1. Introduction

VISION -Value and Impact through Synergy, Interaction and coOperation of Networks of AI Excellence Centres - is a coordination and support action (CSA) financed by the European Commission through the Horizon 2020 programme under the call for proposal H2020-ICT-48-2020. It has been proposed by a consortium of nine organisations coordinated by the University of Leiden (ULEI) and has been lasting 36 months from September 2020.

The aim of the VISION project is to reinforce, interconnect and mobilise Europe's AI community and to orchestrate and accelerate Europe's transition to a world-leading position in the research, development and deployment of AI technologies.

Overall, VISION will reach this objective through the following activities:

- Theme Development Workshops: At least two Theme Development Workshops cutting across multiple NoEs, bringing together researchers, industry representatives and other stakeholders to identify industrial trends and needs, and match these to AI capabilities in Europe.
- European AI Trend Radar: The main results of the Theme Development Workshops as well as from similar events of the four NoEs will be summarised, and complemented by a market analysis and trend foresights to provide a comprehensive overview of AI capabilities and challenges in Europe.
- New European Award for Top Young AI Talent: Creation of a Young AI Talents Award to recognise and celebrate the next generation of AI researchers in Europe.
- Human-Centric AI Education Programme: Development of standardised AI curricula to support current European educational offerings and to support educators in strengthening the digital and human centric skills of their students.
- Community-Shared Best Practices in AI: Sharing of best practices, such as the FSTP Vademecum, standardised AI curricula module for AI non-professionals, a template for Theme Development Workshops to help NoEs to organise such events most effectively, mechanisms for industrial innovation and transfer of AI technologies.
- Integrated Roadmapping: Joint working groups for tackling challenges that span multiple NoEs, including a group on road-mapping and strategy development continuously updating each other on the strategic steps planned by the NoEs and working towards a common high-level alignment of objectives.

## 1.1 Information sources

This document is based upon

- REGULATION (EU) No 1290/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for the participation and dissemination in "Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)" (hereinafter referred to as "**the Rules**"), and the European Commission Multi-beneficiary General Model Grant Agreement and its Annexes;

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- International Standards on Auditing, in consideration of the compliance with ethical requirements, relevant principles, criteria and procedures in order to obtain reasonable assurance that any financial statements concerning any financial support to third parties is free of material misstatement;
- Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999;
- HORIZON 2020 – WORK PROGRAMME 2018-2020 - Annex K. Actions involving financial support to third parties <sup>1</sup>
- Grant Agreement No 952070 and all of its Annexes related to project VISION (Value and Impact through Synergy, Interaction and coOperation of Networks of AI Excellence) which received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2018-2020/annexes/h2020-wp1820-annex-k-fs3p\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2018-2020/annexes/h2020-wp1820-annex-k-fs3p_en.pdf)



## 2. General principles

1. This document is a deliverable of VISION project, within Work Package 3 “European AI Network of Excellence Centers (NoEs): strenghtening synergies” and inferring to Task T3.1: “Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) projects”.

The objective of this document is to support NoEs in managing FSTP projects along the whole process by developing an “FSTP support package”, thus including templates for the Call for Proposals (CfPs), terms and conditions, applications and questionnaires, evaluation manual, panel and matrix, funding award, in accordance with EU principles of openness and transparency.

2. The expected stakeholders of this document are all staff units of NoEs involved in undertaking open calls. Such units shall be provided with proper instruments to execute the mentioned calls by complying with the regulations, policies and provisions aforementioned.

NoEs beneficiaries shall use their own projects Grant Agreement contribution in addition to the guidance note on FSTP under H2020 provided by the European Commission<sup>2</sup> in order to ensure a financial support to third parties while observing the following conditions:

- (a) the maximum total payable amount to third parties shall equal the pertaining budget item dedicated for such purpose in the Estimated budget for the action, Annex 2 of their Grant Agreement;
- (b) criteria for the calculation of the amounts granted to third parties shall be clearly indicated (man-months, average monthly cost, budget broken down into self-explanatory items) in the award contract draft, as resulting from the Estimated Costs form provided in this document as Annex 2;
- (c) a resume of the activities funded in the frame of the financial support has to be reported in the award contract draft; all such activities have to be implemented to the advantage of the third party itself or in favour of the stakeholders specified in the CfP; such activities must not be in favour of the NoE organising the Call, since that would configure a case of sub-contract<sup>3</sup>;
- (d) for the types of activity and categories of persons that will be supported, a shortlist of the allocated staff (indicating names and functions/roles) has to be displayed in the award contract draft;
- (e) clear criteria for identification and selection of the third parties eligible for funding must be put in place. Such third parties/sub-grantees have to be shortlisted in compliance with an **open and transparent process**. Once an award/sub-grant contract is expired, any possibility for renewal must have been explicitly foreseen in the Call for Proposals.

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<sup>2</sup>

[https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/downloads/page/h2020guidancenote\\_financialsupport2thirdparties.pdf](https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/downloads/page/h2020guidancenote_financialsupport2thirdparties.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Third parties or sub-grantees are subject to the very same cost accounting rules of the beneficiaries of the Grant Agreement. Subcontractors instead are linked to the beneficiaries by a purchase or service contract operating within a single project task, aiming for a profit and with no obligation of cost accounting, but invoicing.

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That is why any award contract has to foresee a duration that shall cover the whole multi-annual activities programme, regardless any intermediate stages or ‘sprints’.

Nothing in this document shall hamper an open discussion about common topics such as upcoming open calls, challenges, common activities, etc between the VISION project management team and the NoE management units.

Common topics of interest may be identified together with the NoE coordinators. In due course of projects activities, NoEs representatives may also be invited to share good practices by giving short presentations/webinars.

3. The NoEs shall ensure that the Commission, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) can exercise their rights under their own Grant Agreement, also towards their contractors and sub-grantees receiving a financial support.
4. ‘Financial support’ may render in a contribution granted to natural persons (e.g. allowances, per diem, subsidies, scholarships, internships) or to legal entities, venture capital to start-ups, micro-credit or prizes. Being a contribution, the beneficiaries are always subject to costs accounting and not to invoicing.
5. The NoEs shall state in the proper CfP annex, all the procedures that led to the final shortlist of third parties, as in bullet e) above. Such shortlist must comply with the principles of economicity, efficiency, impartiality, equality, transparency, proportionality and openness.
6. Grant Agreement obligations of NoEs about the appropriate use of the European Commission’s funding shall be extended to third parties (*subgrantee* or *subcontractor*), with a particular concern for the following provisions:
  - to avoid any conflict of interest and comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and sound financial management;
  - to maintain confidentiality obligations upon technical and scientific information;
  - to enhance the visibility of the European Commission’s contribution;
  - to be liable for any loss, damage or injury resulting from the implementation of the activities

Therefore any entity already involved in a NoE is not eligible. Should the risk of a conflict of interest arise, the persons in charge of the open call process shall immediately inform the NoEs coordinator who will communicate the above mentioned risk to the European Commission in order to put in place the required steps to solve the conflict or avoid it.

### 3. OPEN CALL template and text

(on NoE headed paper with both EU and NoE's logos, name of the NoE project, Funding Programme)

In the customized template, each NoE shall provide all specific information, while in this vademecum the template is of a general nature and therefore is left blank. Italic text in the next sections are examples that show what is written by the NoEs in the respective sections of the Open Call text

#### 3.1 Title of the Call: ...

Year: ...

#### 3.2 Presentation of NoE

(mentioning a brief description of the objectives and output, organisations involved in the project, abstract of the workplan).

*AI4Media project aims to become a Centre of Excellence (CoE) and establish a network of researchers across Europe and beyond. It will focus on delivering the next generation of core AI advances to serve the media sector, to make sure that European values of ethical and trustworthy AI are embedded in future AI deployments, and to reimagine AI as a crucial beneficial enabling technology in the service of society and media.*

*The objective of the AI4Media FSTP programme (open calls) is to attract and involve researchers and the industry, particularly SMEs, in the project's network and to boost cross-border and cross-sector innovations within media sectors. AI4Media will launch two open calls, both with two separate tracks: (1) Research (targeted at the research/academia community) and (2) Application (targeted to at industry).*

*Research track: AI4Media aims to attract researchers with innovative ideas, capacity, and knowledge to develop new and complementary research on AI for media considering the domains of project (e.g., new learning paradigms and distributed AI; explainability, robustness and privacy in AI; content-centred AI; human- and society-centred AI).*

#### 3.3 Responsibility of the Call process within the NoE:

(mentioning the WP, Task, management staff of the call and contributing organisations, editors, office, units and all related contacts, notably in the case of complain)

#### 3.4 Describe the type of organisation sought (experience, competence, resources)

*In the case of AI4Media, "Eligibility" information shall be entered in this section of the customized template. AI4Media aims to attract RTOs, SMEs and industry labs to present innovative AI applications, thus engaging with researchers and making available financial support to mobilise these actors while leveraging their knowledge and innovation towards innovative progress in the AI and media sector.*

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### 3.5 Describe the contract to be executed

(nature of the contract, the activities, main scope, the profiles required to carry out the goals, the expected results and main outcome, IPRs).

*In the case of AI4Media, innovative AI applications for the media sector will have to create additional value to research results coming out of AI4Media or adopt AI solutions from other sectors into the media sector. The selected third parties will enter a programme with a duration of 12 months, divided into three stages (“sprints”).*

*In the case of TAILOR, the aim of the third party support is to mobilize excellent researchers to collaborate on key AI topics, including those that cannot be envisioned beforehand, enable young researchers to gain experience in top European AI labs, help unite Europe’s fragmented AI research community, bring in additional expertise, and reinforce Europe’s image as an open, inclusive research powerhouse for AI.*

Intellectual Property Rights governance can be briefly presented here.

### 3.6 Describe the technology sought or at stake

Why AI4EU Call for Challenges? (1-2 pages)

*In the case of TAILOR, financial support can only be offered to European AI researchers, i.e. researchers working at recognized European research labs performing AI research, as demonstrated by their publication record or their role in scientific projects or activities.*

### 3.7 Interaction

Describe how the NoE will interact with the candidate along the envisaged activities.

*When customizing, for example in the case of AI4Media: AI4Media will also provide technology and market assistance to support the sub-grantees in achieving higher impact.*

Description of the AI4EU Support Program Package for Challenge Owners.

### 3.8 List the territories of implementation / impact

For all NoE, these must be established in an EU Member State or in an Associated Country.

### 3.9 Keywords/tags: ...

List the keywords/tags of the call for easier search

### 3.10 Submission and guide for applicants

How to apply? Applications can be submitted to the following address (email address) / uploaded to the following web/cloud space (link URL) by (date & CET time).

More info: a link to a video presentation or other useful means (clarifying the timing for all the stages) is highly recommended.

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Also a FAQ web page has to be prepared by including at least the following questions:

1. What is (name of NoE)?
2. Why should I apply?
3. Who can apply?
4. Should the applicant belong to any specific sector?
5. What kind of resources should I commit in order to participate in the call?
6. Do I need to cooperate with (name of NoE)?
7. Do I need to have a team with AI or IT skills to be selected?
8. What happens if I do not submit my application within the deadline?
9. How long does it take to fill in the application?
10. Will I be able to modify my proposal after submission?
11. Can my organization submit two ideas within the same application?
12. Can my organization submit two different applications?
13. What happens after applications are submitted?
14. What are the different evaluation phases and the expected schedule?
15. How much funding might get each programme/proposal?
16. Do selected beneficiaries get any money in advance?
17. What is the payment schedule and payment conditions?
18. When the subgrant/award agreement will be signed?
19. What services does (enter NoE name) offer for beneficiaries/subgrantees in the supported programme?
20. Is any accountability required on the way the funds have been used, e. g. invoices and other financial documents?

*In the case of AI4Media, all proposals must be submitted via the F6S platform that will be made available (using an existing profile or after creating a new one). Information to be provided by applicants will be indicated on the F6S platform, with some information having to be uploaded. Only applications submitted by the defined deadline will be accepted.*

*In the case of TAILOR, the application should include an invitation letter by the hosting institution. The proposal must be submitted on time and provide all requested information. The candidate must confirm that they will ensure that the Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors can exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the recipient's premises.*

*Timing in TAILOR:*

- Assemble initial review committee by 1 Nov, before General Assembly
- Public call online : 15 November
- 3 submission deadlines (yearly)

### 3.11 Criteria for awarding support

How will we evaluate your proposal? Evaluation criteria will be based both on the candidate presentation – section a) and b) of the “Annex 1 – Sample application form” – and candidate proposal – sections c) and d) of the “Annex 1 – Sample application form” – submitted in the due form.

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Sections from a) to d) of the “Annex 1 – Sample application form” will be assigned up to 40 points. In order to be eligible for the evaluation process, the application ought to obtain at least 30 points.

In case of a continuous call, applications will be reviewed every four months.

*In the case of AI4Media, the following aspects will be taken into consideration:*

- *Alignment: applications must be aligned with the open call objectives/challenges.*
- *Excellence: Projects must have clear objectives aligned with the AI4Media open call and with the general objectives of the project.*
- *Impact: Applicants must demonstrate impact on the AI4Media ecosystem and the contribution the overall project objectives.*
- *Value: Applicants must provide a clear and justified budget detailing all project costs.*
- *Implementation: Applicants must provide evidence that the proposed team has the necessary skills, infrastructure, and management experience to deliver the project in the defined timeframe and with the budget specified.*

*In the case of TAILOR, funding will be awarded through a continuous open call, in which applications will be collected and reviewed every 4 months by a cross-network review panel. The calls will have a clear European dimension, primarily meant for cross border visits and for expanding the impact of the network to European scale.*

*The call will be published widely (including on the Horizon 2020 Funding and Tenders Portal and the project website) and adhering to the Horizon 2020 standards with respect to transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality. The fund will be fair and impartial and promote diversity and inclusiveness in AI research. Applications will be collected and reviewed by a cross-network review panel. This review panel consists of 2 members from each one of the TAILOR scientific boards (SBs), hence 10 in total, elected on a yearly basis. At least 1 member of each SB must be present during each review meeting.*

*Other eligibility criteria are established in the frame of TAILOR project on a pass/fail basis:*

- *Visits to a TAILOR lab or TAILOR workshop can only be funded when the visitor is not affiliated with a TAILOR partner. In that case the visitor must apply for the funding.*
- *Visits to non-TAILOR labs can only be done by a visitor affiliated with a TAILOR lab. In that case the hosting lab applies for the funding.*
- *Interested third parties can only apply for travel funding, not other costs.*
- *Research visits can range between 1 and 12 months. Visits to TAILOR workshops must be less than a month.*

## 3.12 Funding award

Awarded maximum financial support: EUR ...

(in case of a call with different objectives and multiple awards, there must be as many maximum amounts as the objectives to be achieved/awards to be assigned: each candidate is allowed to apply for only one of the objectives/awards, therefore candidates shall specify which objective/award they are interested in).

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**Important: the total amount awarded in the foreseen year has to be clearly stated. A renewal of the contract can be allowed - if longer terms cannot be established in advance - for the completion of the work described in the Call. Therefore the Call must describe the whole life-cycle activities along multiple years.**

*In the case of AI4Media, the total amount of funding per applicant is limited to €60.000, with applicants required to justify in detail the value being requested. The total amount of funding available for the AI4Media FSTP programme is €1.000.000 to be equally divided among the two open calls and two tracks.*

*In the case of TAILOR, the project includes a connectivity fund which provides financial support to AI researchers from all over Europe to visit host institutions within the network or vice versa. 75% of this connectivity fund, amounting to 1.5 MEUR, is set aside as financial support to third parties. The total amount of funding per partner is limited to 60.000 EUR. The funding only offers travel support, for housing and sustenance. The exact maximum amount is established beforehand depending on the destination country and city, and limited to a maximum amount per day. We will use the standard limits used by Dutch universities. Only actual costs can be reimbursed.*

State the applicable law and judicial reference of the contract.

## 4. OPEN CALL PROCESS

The call text (including the ‘guide for applicants’ as of Section 3.10 of this document) and the application form (as of Section 7 of this document) must be sent to each NoE dedicated Project Officer 30 (thirty) days before launching the call.

For the selection procedure and criteria, the call will be issued in accordance with the following conditions:

- publish open calls widely (including the EC Funding & Tenders Portal and the project websites)
- keep calls continuous in time or open for at least two months
- inform recipients of call updates (if any) and the outcome of the call (list of selected projects, amounts and names of selected recipients)

### 4.1 Applications

The application consists of the following sections:

#### **Candidate presentation:**

**Section a)** main research records, technical developments and results achieved

*TAILOR will include under this section a): Scientific track record (10 points). The candidate must have a proven track record in terms of publications, software tools, or other outputs in AI research, also taking into account their age and personal situation.*

**Section b)** main facility features, real events suitability such as workshops

*TAILOR may include under section b): Suitability of the host (5 points). It must be clear why the hosting lab is an appropriate place to carry out the research. For visits to TAILOR workshops, it must be clear why the workshop is appropriate to attain the goals of the visit.*

*TAILOR may include also in this section b): Suitability of visit length (5 points): The length of the visit (to a lab or a workshop) must be adequate for the goals of the visit.*

#### **Candidate proposal:**

**Section c)** main technical synergies being proposed and requirements for the envisaged achievement

*TAILOR will include under this section c): Trustworthy AI excellence (10 points). It must be clear how the visit will help progress towards Trustworthy AI and/or help integrate current research in learning, optimisation and reasoning towards that goal.*

**Section d)** main opportunities that will be created and plans for validation; targets and strategies

*In the case of AI4Media, top-ranked applications will move on to an interview phase and will be evaluated against the proposed concept/ technologies, quality of the team and exploitation potential of the application.*

*TAILOR will include under this section d): Scientific step-up (10 points). The visit will help the candidate (and/or their lab) gain important experience and recognition in AI.*



## 4.2 Evaluation stage

Before advancing to a full review, an initial eligibility check, accomplished by the CfP management unit, will verify if: the applicant is a legal entity in an eligible country; if there is a clear uniqueness to the application; if the entity has applied to a previous call; applicant's alignment with the NoE call for proposals and challenges.

The initial eligibility check will be fulfilled within a fixed number of calendar days. Within the same term, a shortlist will be published at the given link. The shortlisted applicants will be contacted by the CfP management unit in order to schedule a conference call interview within a fixed number of calendar days after the publication of the shortlist. Ranked applicants will thus move on to such interview phase and will be evaluated against the proposed concept/ technologies, quality of the team/programme and exploitation potential of the application.

The selected entity, if any, will negotiate with the NoE the implementation plan and the financial support and sign a FSTP agreement with the NoE during the year in order to obtain the financial support covering eligible costs and according to the specific milestone/deliverable for each NoE workplan.

*This is the timing in the case of AI4Media:*

- *Open Call 1 – Research track and Application track: to be launched in September 2021.*
- *Open Call 1 projects to start by February 2022.*
- *Open Call 2 - Research track and Application track: to be launched in July 2022.*
- *Open Call 2 projects to start by December 2022.*

*In the case of ELISE, the process is similar and it includes also a “jury day”: a pitch day in which the applicants pitch their solution in front of the selection committee. In that case the macro-process might be:*

1. *Eligibility check.*
2. *External evaluation. A panel of external experts evaluate the proposals.*
3. *Consensus meeting. To agree on the beneficiaries or if there is Jury Day to agree the companies that go to the Jury Day. This is done by the selection committee formed by members of the consortium.*

## 4.3 Appointment of the evaluation committee

The call management team appoints the members of the evaluation committee in accordance to the specific features of the call's object. Membership on a voluntary basis will be assigned to:

- a) two members from the scientific boards of the NoE as identified in the NoE workplan, to be renewed every 12 months;
- b) an expert from the innovation area of CLAIRE (Confederation of Laboratories for AI Research inEurope);
- c) an expert from the European Commission's High-level Expert Group on AI (optional);
- d) a senior researcher on AI from the H2020 VISION project consortium (optional);
- e) an expert from AI4EU Foundation.

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Depending on the type of project the composition of this committee might be shifted, for example to guarantee more research focus or to allow presence of a particular kind of industry.

### 4.4 Evaluation score

Evaluation criteria will be based both on the candidate presentation and proposal, submitted in the due form.

In case of a continuous call, applications will be reviewed every four months.

Sections from *a)* to *d)* (see “Annex 1 – Sample application form”) will be assigned up to 40 points. In order to be eligible for the final shortlist, the application ought to obtain at least 30 points.

*In the case of TAILOR, applicants scoring 28 points may already be shortlisted.*

### 4.5 Reservation of rights

The NoE consortium reserves the right – at its sole discretion - not to sign any FSTP agreement following the selection of any application until regular reception by the NoE of the European Commission’s contribution foreseen for the financial support in accordance with Annex 2 of the specific Grant Agreement (Estimated Budget for the Action).

### 4.6 Open call administration checklist

The management unit in charge of the call for proposals shall comply with the following mandatory practices:

- to file and attach to the call documentation all candidates’ applications;
- to file and attach to the same documentation all of the appointment letters that have been signed by the evaluation committee members;
- to attach to the call documentation the assessment matrix used for scoring the rank position of the shortlisted candidates and any minutes of the evaluation committee’s meetings;
- to attach the final complete rankings;
- to file and attach all communications transmitted by the candidates renouncing to the financial support;
- to file and attach all objective information that clarify impediment reasons of the candidates, before or after the final shortlist is issued;
- to attach any mail/email showing the late reception of applications or of any required information from the candidates, as well as any other evidence of exclusion or ineligibility for awarding the sub-grant.

### 4.7 Negotiation phase

Before awarding the financial support there might be a negotiation phase to sign the agreements with the beneficiaries, if the call foresee it. Also, if relevant for the call, here an Ethical evaluation is performed to address any issue before signing the agreement.

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## 4.8 Award of the financial support

The granting of the funding will be awarded by complying with the following requirements:

- ensure that the eligibility rules are transposed in agreements signed with recipients of support and that financial control and audit mechanisms are in place
- ensure that the final recipients comply with the IPR rules and the communication, dissemination and visibility rules
- ensure effective and reliable monitoring and reporting of the supported projects (including information on key performance indicators, impact framework, progress towards financial sustainability, partnership, eligibility and regularity of the expenditure claimed, etc), in the format and timing specified by the call management team
- ensure provisions for re-orienting or stopping underperforming projects (with regular 'go'/'no go' decision points, including a payment system linked to milestone achievements)

## 5. VISION support activities

The VISION project can provide assistance to many activities related to FSTP providing methodological knowledge and competence expertise to ensures the compliance to regulations and recommendations and the support to implement the whole process in all the following steps

1. Preparation and management of the open call
  - Support in the preparation of the necessary documentation, check the compliance of documents
2. Promotion to the launch of the call
  - publication and dissemination of the call among partners channels in order to attract as many prospective applicants as possible
3. Evaluation of applications submitted
  - Provision of experts as participants in the evaluation panel to help select the most appropriate beneficiary.
  - Participation of VISION experts in the evaluation will be transparent so that non-conflicts of interest are ensured.
4. Legal advice to ensure that legal requirements and regulations are met
  - contractual and regulatory recommendations for the identification and selection of the third party
5. Guidance on financial and accounting aspects about the use of the funds to the awarded sub-grantees, in liaison with the NoE project
  - experts available to answers requests or clarify doubts about administrative-accounting requirements to be followed for the preparation, management and reporting of the third party
  - General external support to the awarded sub-grantees, in liaison with the NoE project.

In addition, in order to ensure a smooth implementation of financial support to third parties, the Vision project offers expert competences to provide key information and to share support material (template documents). Moreover, representatives from the VISION project can also act as external advisors in a NoE project evaluation board.

## 6. Conclusions

FSTP represents a key element interconnect and mobilise Europe's AI community and to orchestrate and accelerate Europe's transition to a world-leading position in the research, development and deployment of AI technologies.

It constitutes a significant instrument for successfully involving organizations although this scheme is not very frequently used and, consequently, the guidelines for its correct use are not very detailed.

Thus, the objective of this document is to facilitate the NoE partners to the correct use of this tool in accordance with rules, regulations and requirements. This deliverable is an attempt to provide a methodology and procedure to deal with FSTP in compliance in with laws and regulations.

The document defines the general framework and provides guidance about all necessary steps to manage financial support to third parties offering also good practices and recommendations to successfully deal with this funding scheme.

In the Annex section a number of useful templates are provided which can be personalized as needed.

Nothing in this document shall hamper an open discussion about common topics such as upcoming open calls, challenges, common activities. In due course of projects activities, NoEs representatives may also be invited to share good practices by giving short presentations/webinars.

## 7. Annex 1 – Sample application form<sup>4</sup>

### Questionnaire for recipients applying for funding

#### Introduction of the applicant

Name of the legal entity or natural person	
Contact person	
Official address	
Contact details (email and telephone)	
Legal entity type (industry, SME, public entity, no-profit, natural person, etc)	
VAT/Registration number and date of founding (state the identity card number and age, in case of natural person)	
Number of employees and collaborators working for the entity (affiliation or current employment for natural person)	

#### Candidate presentation

##### Section a)

a.1 Describe briefly your experience, competence and resources. History of the applicant: what is the applicant best known for? Briefly describe projects, products, prototypes, publications, software tools and other relevant output/IP in AI research.  
(no more than 10 lines)

a.2 Provide information on the involved team (for legal entities) or a scientific proven track record (for natural persons), as well as any affiliation to relevant R&D and innovation communities.  
(no more than 10 lines)

a.3 Describe your governance structure (for legal entities). Who are your stake/shareholders? (for legal entities).  
(no more than 5 lines)

#### Main technical developments and results achieved

(no more than 1 page)

<sup>4</sup> Other example of an equivalent form can be found here: <https://ai4eu-challenges.fundingbox.com/apply>

### **Section b)**

b.1 Describe your operational capacity, infrastructure and facilities (for legal entities).

Suitability of the host.

(no more than 10 lines)

b.2 Please provide also information on the investment strategy and outcomes. What is the total amount invested/granted in AI (or other topics, enter as appropriate) projects during the last 3 years? Can you briefly describe a recent success case?

(no more than 10 lines)

b.3 Explain the financial sustainability of the applicant. Are you in the position to contribute financially to the implementation of the collaboration? How are you currently funded/financed?

(no more than 5 lines).

**Explain why the hosting lab is an appropriate place to carry out the research** *(for legal entities).*

**Explain why the workshop is appropriate and coherent with the past work/activity** *(for natural persons)*

*(no more than 1 page)*

### **Candidate proposal**

### **Section c)**

**Main technical synergies being proposed and requirements for the envisaged achievement**

*(no more than 2 pages)*

### **Section d)**

**Main opportunities that will be created and plans for validation; targets and strategies for the dissemination**

*(no more than 2 pages)*

### **d.1 Vision for collaboration with** *(name of the NoE)*

**Please describe your complementarity to** *(name of the NoE)* **objectives and activities**

*(no more than 1 page)*

## 8. Annex 2 – Sample budget table and KPIs

Below we report some examples for budget table and KPIs.

It is important to consider that in some cases the FSTP organizer can also not ask for a budget table, as FSTP is an instrument defined by the EC to simplify the access to funding. In that cases payment to the beneficiaries is based on delivery, agreeing at the beginning of the support program with the beneficiaries the KPIs, deliverables and milestones. This schema is similar to the lump sum scheme, like in EIC accelerator for example.

### 8.1 Budget table

(enter here the name of the legal entity/natural person)

Please add here the cost in € per PM

Direct costs							
Description	Person Months	Activity costs	Indirect costs	Total costs	Requested funding in €	Requested funding in %	Activity description
<b>Personnel costs</b>							
Enter task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
Enter task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
Enter task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
Enter task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
Enter task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
<b>Sum</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	
<b>Travel expenses</b>							
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe activity
<b>Equipment</b>							
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Briefly describe equipment
<b>Other direct costs</b>							
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Describe cost item
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Describe cost item
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Describe cost item
Task name and number		0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €		Describe cost item
<b>Sum</b>		<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	
<b>Subcontracting</b>							
Description				Total costs	Requested funding in €	Requested funding in %	Budget distribution
Subcontracting					0 €		Describe activity and expected result
<b>Sum</b>				<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	
<b>Total</b>				<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	

### 8.2 KPIs table

TOPIC	Region	(If relevant) Event Date - Indicative	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	KPIs
General	General	Preparation for/participation in Activities (e.g. Partner Event)													Describe KPI1
General	General	Other activity													Describe KPI2
General	General	Other activity													Describe KPI3



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## 9. Annex 3 – Sample invitation letter for evaluators

*Place, date*

**Subject:** Invitation to Evaluation Committee for (*name of the call*)

Dear .....

On behalf of the (*NoE project*), I am pleased to invite you to act as an expert in the Evaluation Committee that will assess the applications to the (*name of the call and link*).

The selection process is scheduled as follows:

- by (*enter date*) you will receive by e-mail the applications we have assigned for your consideration;
- we kindly ask you to return your assessment laid out in the Annex of the call (Evaluation Matrix & Rank List) by (*enter date*).
- the Evaluation Committee will held the assessment meeting via videoconference where the short list of applicants will be finalized.

As expert member of such committee, you will abide by the following conditions.

### PERFORMANCE OF THE CONTRACT

1. The expert will not receive any compensation<sup>5</sup>.
2. The expert works independently, in a personal capacity and not on behalf of any organisations.
3. The expert must:
  - (a) evaluate each proposal in a confidential and fair way, in accordance with the call principles;
  - (b) assist the NoE to the best of his/her abilities, professional skills and knowledge and by applying the highest ethical and moral standards;
  - (c) follow any instructions and time-schedules given by the NoE call management unit and deliver consistently high quality work.
4. The expert may not delegate another person to carry out the work or may not be replaced by any other person.
5. If a legal entity involved in one proposal approaches the expert during the evaluation of this proposal, she/he shall immediately inform the NoE call management unit.

### OBLIGATIONS OF IMPARTIALITY<sup>6</sup>

The expert must perform his/her **work impartially**. To this end, the expert is required to inform the call management unit of any conflicts of interest arising in the course of his/her work.

1. Definition of the conflict of interest: for a given application, a conflict of interest exists if the expert:

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<sup>5</sup> Many calls pay evaluators: in this case we will replace point 1 with the amount and conditions of payment.

<sup>6</sup> In some cases, the impartiality and confidentiality sections might be part of the agreement signed with the evaluators. In those cases this section will be much simplified.

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- (a) was involved in the preparation of the application
  - (b) stands to benefit directly or indirectly if the application is accepted
  - (c) has a close family or personal relationship with any person representing an applicant legal entity or with any natural person applying
  - (d) is a director, trustee or partner or is in any way involved in the management of an applicant legal entity or is a collaborator/consultant/contractor of the natural person applying
  - (e) is employed or contracted by one of the applicant legal entities or any named subcontractors
2. Consequences of conflicts of interest:
- (a) If a conflict of interest is reported by the expert or established by the call management unit, the expert must not evaluate the application concerned (consensus group), or take part in any panel review (including possible hearings) where the application is discussed
  - (b) If a conflict becomes apparent at any stage of the evaluation, the expert must immediately inform the call management unit. If a conflict is confirmed, the expert must stop evaluating the application concerned. Any comments and scores already given by the expert will be discounted. If necessary, the expert will be replaced.

If it is revealed during an evaluation that an expert has knowingly concealed a conflict of interest, the expert will be immediately excluded. Any consensus group in which she/he has participated will be declared null. The consensus meeting will be reconvened and the application(s) concerned will be re-evaluated.

### OBLIGATIONS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The NoE and the expert must treat confidentially any information and documents, in any form (i.e. paper or electronic), disclosed in writing or orally in relation to the performance of the evaluation.
2. The expert undertakes to observe strict **confidentiality** in relation to his/her work. To this end, the expert:
  - (a) must not use confidential information or documents for any purpose other than fulfilling his/her obligations under the evaluation performance without prior written approval of the call management unit
  - (b) must not disclose, directly or indirectly, confidential information or documents relating to applicants, without prior written approval of the call management unit.

In particular, the expert:

1. must not discuss any application with others, including other experts or the call staff not directly involved in evaluating the application, except during the formal discussion at the meetings moderated by or with the knowledge and approval of the call management unit
2. must not disclose:
  - a) any detail of the evaluation process and its outcomes or of any application submitted for evaluation for any purpose other than fulfilling his/her obligations under the evaluation performance without prior written approval of the call management unit
  - b) his/her advice given to the call management unit on any application, to the candidates or to any other person (including colleagues, students, etc.)
  - c) the names of other experts participating in the evaluation.
3. must not communicate with candidates on any application:
  - during the evaluation, except in panel hearings between experts and the applicants

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organised by the call management unit as part of the evaluation process;

4. If the applications are made available electronically to the expert who then works from his/her own or other suitable premises, she/he will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent, and for returning, erasing or destroying all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation as instructed.
5. If the evaluation takes place in premises controlled by the call management unit, the expert:
  - (a) must not remove from the premises applications, copies or notes on evaluation, either on paper or in electronic form
  - (b) will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent, and for returning, erasing or destroying all confidential documents or files on completing the evaluation as instructed.
6. If the expert seeks further information (for example through the internet, specialised databases, etc.) to complete their examination of the proposals, she/he:
  - (a) must observe the overall rules for confidentiality for obtaining such information
  - (b) must not contact applicants.
  - (c) must not contact third parties without prior written approval of the call management unit.
7. These confidentiality obligations are binding on:
  - (a) the call management unit and any other NoE's staff
  - (b) the expert during performance of the evaluation and for five years starting from the date of the last evaluation task performed by the expert unless:
    - i. the call management unit agrees to release the expert from the confidentiality obligations earlier;
    - ii. the confidential information becomes public through other channel;
    - iii. disclosure of the confidential information is required by law.

I kindly ask you to return this letter signed for acceptance and for consent to the processing of personal data.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Marco Pistore  
 Director of the Digital Society Center  
 Fondazione Bruno Kessler

*Personal data collected during the relationship with the NoE will be used for internal management purposes, and for relations with benefited organizations, for relations with public government and with banks for payment purposes. Personal information is processed using manual, computer and electronic systems which are suitable to ensure the security and confidentiality of data.*

Signature as for acceptance

.....

## 10. Annex 4 – Sample evaluation matrix and ranked list

### Evaluators' guide document of the call management unit<sup>7</sup>

The selection process for the financial support to third parties that apply to this Call shall go through two stages: pre-selection and selection. During the first stage, all applications submitted within the deadline will be evaluated under their formal eligibility aspects by the call management unit of the NoE.

In the second stage the Evaluation Committee will assess and score each application against the criteria implied in the application forms:

1. Experience, track record and results achieved in AI research and development;
2. Suitability of the host, grants/investments on AI and financial sustainability;
3. Synergy proposed and requirements for the envisaged achievement;
4. Opportunities envisaged, plans for validation and dissemination; vision for collaboration

In the second stage, each criterion could be scored on a scale from 0 to 10:

- **0-1** Application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information
- **2-3 Poor** – criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- **4-5 Fair** – application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses
- **6-7 Good** – application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present
- **8-9 Very good** – application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
- **10 Excellent** – application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The maximum overall score is thus 40 (10x4): the score is averaged over the number of evaluators.

The threshold value is 30.

The applicants that achieved average overall qualifying scores above the threshold will be invited for a meeting with the Evaluation Committee. The invited applicants may be asked to provide further information to clarify the application and help the Evaluation Committee establish its final ranking list and scores. The Evaluation Committee may request a remote video interview with and/or onsite visit to the applicant's venues (in case of a legal entity). The discussion will turn around:

- the activities to be performed,
- the funding requested and
- possible co-financing made available by the shortlisted organizations/natural persons.

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<sup>7</sup> Specific calls might have different evaluation scores: for example ELISE follows the same 3 criteria than EU Projects: Excellence, Impact, and Implementation. Including subcriteria in each of them (e.g. EXCELLENCE will evaluate: How will your challenge contribute to solving a structural problem of your sector? How will solving the challenge level-up the innovation within the market? ...). For each of the three criteria they use a scale of 5, similar to the evaluation of EU projects.

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Alternatively, in some cases (e.g. ELISE) a “Jury day” is organized where the applicants have to pitch their solution and have a Q&A with the evaluation committee formed by members of the consortium and an advisory board.

In addition to the previous score, the final selection will be made according to the best balance among these three elements.

When the meeting is over, the Evaluation Committee produces a ranked list of applications, including all applications with scores above the qualifying score, and draws up a list of selected candidates. The number of applications in the list depends on the available budget.

The call management unit will notify the applicants if their application has been rejected.

The selected candidates will negotiate with the NoE coordinator or with the dedicated NoE partner, the implementation plan, the financial support and sign an FSTP agreement in order to obtain the financial support covering claimed eligible costs, according to the call rules.

### What are we reviewing?

We are addressing applicants in order to identify natural persons or organisations providing well structured proposals with a fit to the NoE action lines.

As a NoE we expect the applicants to support us in (enter as appropriate)

Please take into account the Evaluation and Selection guidelines

### How to evaluate?

Step 1. Individual evaluation until (enter date as appropriate)

View the applications that were assigned to you and rate them by considering the scoring guidelines in Evaluation and Selection. Please add 1-2 sentences per applicant to summarize your assessment.

Each reviewer will be appointed as lead for a certain number of applications. Your name will appear in green for those applications you are asked to present at the consensus meeting (maximum 5 minutes)  
You will receive the final votes of all reviewers beforehand and can check whether your opinions align or diverge prior to the meeting

Step 2. At consensus meeting to be held on (enter date as appropriate)

Each application will be discussed (maximum 5 minutes) and ranked based on average overall score. Applications with an average score higher than 30 will be admitted to the shortlist.

Step 3. After consensus meeting; only Call management unit (enter deadline as appropriate)

Inform all applicants about the results and organise meetings with the pre-selected

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Interviews will take place on (enter dates as appropriate)

Step 4. Only call management unit until (enter date as appropriate)

Ranking with numeric values and best balance among the 3 elements: proposed co-financing by the applicant, impact of the joint activities and cooperation and requested funding. The first applicant on the list (number 1) is the best and selected. Final decision for selection of the third party to be supported. Start the negotiations for FSTP agreement

Step 5. By (enter deadline as appropriate)

FSTP agreements signed

Evaluation Committee rank list for the Call (enter name of the call and year)						
Applicant	Criteria	Evaluation Committee				Average overall score
#1 Applicant - Organisation Name:	[0-10 scores]	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	
	Section a)					
	Section b)					
	Section c)					
	Section d)					
	Sum	0	0	0	0	
	Short assessment in own words					
	Average overall score					
Final Rank position (numeric)						
#2 Applicant - Organisation Name:	[0-10 scores]	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	
	Section a)					
	Section b)					
	Section c)					
	Section d)					
	Sum	0	0	0	0	
	Short assessment in own words					
	Average overall score					
Final Rank position (numeric)						
#3 Applicant - Organisation Name:	[0-10 scores]	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	
	Section a)					
	Section b)					
	Section c)					
	Section d)					
	Sum	0	0	0	0	
	Short assessment in own words					
	Average overall score					
Final Rank position (numeric)						
#4 Applicant - Organisation Name:	[0-10 scores]	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	
	Section a)					
	Section b)					
	Section c)					
	Section d)					
	Sum	0	0	0	0	
	Short assessment in own words					
	Average overall score					
Final Rank position (numeric)						
#5 Applicant - Organisation Name:	[0-10 scores]	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	
	Section a)					
	Section b)					
	Section c)					
	Section d)					
	Sum	0	0	0	0	
	Short assessment in own words					
	Average overall score					
Final Rank position (numeric)						
#6 Applicant - Organisation Name:	[0-10 scores]	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	name and surname	
	Section a)					
	Section b)					
	Section c)					
	Section d)					
	Sum	0	0	0	0	
	Short assessment in own words					
	Average overall score					
Final Rank position (numeric)						

## 11. Annex 5 – Overview of NoEs approach to FSTP activities

### 11.1 Project AI4MEDIA

AI4Media aims to become a Centre of Excellence (CoE) and establish a network of researchers across Europe and beyond. It will focus on delivering the next generation of core AI advances to serve the media sector, to make sure that European values of ethical and trustworthy AI are embedded in future AI deployments, and to reimagine AI as a crucial beneficial enabling technology in the service of society and media.

In view of establishing this CoE, the network, and the achievement of the mentioned objectives, AI4Media will make available financial support to researchers and the industry to mobilise these actors and leverage their knowledge and innovation towards innovative progress in the AI and media sector.

#### Objectives

The objective of the AI4Media FSTP programme (open calls) is to attract and involve researchers and the industry, particularly SMEs, in the project's network and to boost cross-border and cross-sector innovations within media sectors. AI4Media will launch two open calls, both with two separate tracks: (1) Research (targeted at the research/academia community) and (2) Application (targeted to at industry).

#### Activities

- Research track:** AI4Media aims to attract researchers with innovative ideas, capacity, and knowledge to develop new and complementary research on AI for media considering the domains of project (e.g., new learning paradigms and distributed AI; explainability, robustness and privacy in AI; content-centred AI; human- and society-centred AI).  
The selected third parties will enter a programme with a duration of 12 months, divided into three stages ("sprints").
- Application:** AI4Media aims to attract RTOs, SMEs, and industry labs to present innovative AI applications for the media sector either by creating additional value to research results coming out of AI4Media or adopting AI solutions from other sectors into the media sector.  
The selected third parties will enter a programme with a duration of 9 months, divided into three stages ("sprints"). AI4Media will also provide technology and market support to support the sub-grantees in achieving higher impact.

#### Eligibility

The FSTP is open to individual entities that are considered eligible by H2020 rules: single European mid-caps, SMEs and Micro SMEs as defined in EU law; web entrepreneurs and individual sole-traders; and European secondary and higher education establishments, research institutes and other not-for-profit research organisations. For all cases, these must be established in an EU Member State or in an Associated Country. Any entity already directly involved in AI4Media is not eligible. All proposals must be submitted via the F6S platform that will be made available (using an existing profile or after creating a new one). Information to be provided by applicants will be indicated on the F6S platform, with some



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information having to be uploaded. Only applications submitted by the defined deadline will be accepted. Before advancing to a full review, an initial eligibility check will verify if: the applicant is a legal entity in an eligible country; if there is a clear uniqueness to the application; if the entity has applied to a previous call; applicant's alignment with the AI4Media call for proposals and challenges.

### Criteria for awarding support

The evaluation of the open calls will follow a two-step process, including a remote evaluation followed by an online interview. In the remote evaluation, the follow criteria will be considered:

- **Alignment:** applications must be aligned with the open call objectives/challenges.
- **Excellence:** Projects must have clear objectives aligned with the AI4Media open call and with the general objectives of the project.
- **Impact:** Applicants must demonstrate impact on the AI4Media ecosystem and the contribution the overall project objectives.
- **Value:** Applicants must provide a clear and justified budget detailing all project costs.
- **Implementation:** Applicants must provide evidence that the proposed team has the necessary skills, infrastructure, and management experience to deliver the project in the defined timeframe and with the budget specified.

Top-ranked applications will move on to an interview phase and will be evaluated against the proposed concept/ technologies, quality of the team and exploitation potential of the application.

### Amount of funding

The total amount of funding per applicant is limited to €60.000, with applicants required to justify in detail the value being requested. The total amount of funding available for the AI4Media FSTP programme is €1.000.000 to be equally divided among the two open calls and two tracks.

### Timing

- Open Call 1 – Research track and Application track: to be launched in September 2021.
- Open Call 1 projects to start by February 2022.
- Open Call 2 - Research track and Application track: to be launched in July 2022.
- Open Call 2 projects to start by December 2022.

## 11.2 Project TAILOR

The TAILOR project includes a connectivity fund which provides financial support to AI researchers from all over Europe to visit host institutions within the network or vice versa. 75% of this connectivity fund, amounting to 1.5 MEUR, is set aside as financial support to third parties.

### Objectives

The aim of the third party support is to mobilize excellent researchers to collaborate on key AI topics, including those that cannot be envisioned beforehand, enable young researchers to gain experience in top European AI labs, help unite Europe's fragmented AI research community, bring in additional expertise, and reinforce Europe's image as an open, inclusive research powerhouse for AI. Funding will be awarded through a continuous open call, in which applications will be collected and reviewed every 4 months by a cross-network review panel. The calls will have a clear European dimension, primarily meant for cross border visits and for expanding the impact of the network to European scale.

### Activities

The third party support is limited to the following fixed list of actions:

- Research visits to TAILOR partners allowing young promising researchers to gain valuable experience in excellent AI labs (scientific step-up).
- Research visits by excellent researchers outside the network to TAILOR partners, or visits by TAILOR researchers to other leading AI labs, to share knowledge or work on key AI challenges (scientific influx).
- Organization or attendance of joint workshops organized by TAILOR members to solidify European AI research, bring different initiatives and stakeholders closer together, and increase AI excellence awareness worldwide (scientific alliance).
- Organization or attendance of joint workshops organized by TAILOR members on key AI research challenges, European AI infrastructure, and AI education

### Eligibility

Financial support can only be offered to European AI researchers, i.e. researchers working at recognized European research labs performing AI research, as demonstrated by their publication record or their role in scientific projects or activities. The application should include an invitation letter by the hosting institution. The proposal must be submitted on time and provide all requested information. The candidate must confirm that they will ensure that the Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors can exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the recipient's premises.

### Criteria for awarding support

Funding will be awarded through a continuous open call, published widely (including on the Horizon 2020 Funding and Tenders Portal and the project website) and adhering to the Horizon 2020 standards with respect to transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality. The fund will be fair and impartial and promote diversity and inclusiveness in AI research. Applications will be collected and reviewed every 4 months by a cross-network review panel. This review panel consists of 2 members from each one of the TAILOR scientific boards (SBs) described in 3.2.1, hence 10 in total, elected on a yearly basis. At least 1 member of each SB must be present during each review meeting.

Eligibility criteria: These are evaluated on a pass/fail basis:

- Visits to a TAILOR lab or TAILOR workshop can only be funded when the visitor is not affiliated with a TAILOR partner. In that case the visitor must apply for the funding.
- Visits to non-TAILOR labs can only be done by a visitor affiliated with a TAILOR lab. In that case the hosting lab applies for the funding.
- Interested third parties can only apply for travel funding, not other costs.
- Research visits can range between 1 and 12 months. Visits to TAILOR workshops must be less than a month.

Proposals will be further evaluated by the following criteria:

- **Trustworthy AI excellence (10 points):** It must be clear how the visit will help progress towards Trustworthy AI and/or help integrate current research in learning, optimisation and reasoning towards that goal.

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- **Scientific track record (10 points):** The candidate must have a proven track record in terms of publications, software tools, or other outputs in AI research, also taking into account their age and personal situation.
- **Scientific step-up (10 points):** The visit will help the candidate (and/or their lab) gain important experience and recognition in AI.
- **Suitability of the host (5 points):** It must be clear why the hosting lab is an appropriate place to carry out the research. For visits to TAILOR workshops, it must be clear why the workshop is appropriate to attain the goals of the visit.
- **Suitability of visit length (5 points):** The length of the visit (to a lab or a workshop) must be adequate for the goals of the visit.

In total, up to 40 points can be awarded. The minimal threshold for funding is 28 points.

### Amount of funding

The total amount of funding per partner is limited to 60.000 EUR. The funding only offers travel support, for housing and sustenance. The exact maximum amount is established beforehand depending on the destination country and city, and limited to a maximum amount per day. We will use the standard limits used by Dutch universities. Only actual costs can be reimbursed.

The outcome of the calls will be published without delay, including a description of the third party action, the date of the award, duration, and the legal name and country.

### Timing

- Assemble initial review committee by 1 Nov, before General Assembly
- Public call online : 15 November
- 3 submission deadlines (yearly)

## 11.3 Project HumanE-AI-Net

HumanE AI Net has a very different approach to involving third parties. The project essentially will have no open calls for external projects. Instead it will have a mechanism for involving individual researchers in **micro-projects**, which will required quite different mechanisms than what are defined in the scope of this deliverable.

A micro project is a cooperation of two or more partners over a period of typically 1-4 months aimed at producing a tangible outcome (paper, data set, demo, tutorial etc.) to be made available to the community through the AI4EU platform and appropriately promoted in the community. Key **hard** requirements are:

1. **two or more** HumaneAI Net partners working together over a period of 1-4 months
2. cooperation to be documented eg. through joint authorship of the paper.
3. topic clearly tied to one or more tasks as described in the proposal (can be tasks from different WPs)
4. **tangible outcome** (paper, data set, toolset,demo,...)
5. outcome **made available through the AI4EU** platform
6. a short presentation (5-15 mins) recorded at the end of the project to be made available through appropriate channels, including the project YouTube channel)

### Financing

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Micro-project will be funded directly through usual procedures, thus not involving FSTP mechanism. They will be funded within each WP. Effort claimed will need to demonstrate clearly that the effort was dedicated to a micro-project in accordance with the requirements 1-5 above.

## 11.4 Project ELISE

ELISE will select 32 SMEs and startups (16 in first Open Call, 32 in total) that develop novel AI-based services or applications with the support from Advisor to address one of the ELISE challenges.

Selected companies will enter the 6-months Support Program and receive:

- Up to € 60.000 (lump sum) to develop novel AI-based applications to the given challenges,
- Technical mentors and services from ELISE network

### Who are we looking for?

We are looking for the following type of applicants:

- SMEs (including startups)

Applicants, at the moment of applying, must be registered legal entities established in:

- The Member States of the European Union and its Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) or
- Associated Countries to H2020 or
- The United Kingdom.

The ELISE partners can NOT be involved in the projects (or their affiliates or employees).

### What types of activities can be funded?

ELISE is looking for projects based on AI applications that address the development and implementation of technology and systems applicable to the following markets or areas of experimentation:

- Geometric Deep Learning: graph, group and gauge convolutions
- Robust Machine Learning
- Interactive Learning and Interventional Representations
- Machine Learning and Computer Vision
- Robot Learning: Closing the Reality Gap
- Human-centric Machine Learning
- Theory, Algorithms and Computations of Modern Learning Systems
- Quantum and physics based Machine Learning
- Natural Intelligence
- Health
- Machine Learning in Earth and Climate Sciences
- Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- Multimedia / multimodal information
- Information retrieval
- Explainability and Fairness in Data Mining

Each proposal must address one of the ELISE challenges. The Challenges are based on the ELISE Research Program and are the following:

- 1: Geometric Deep Learning: graph, group and gauge convolutions
- 2: Robust Machine Learning

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- 3: Interactive Learning and Interventional Representations
- 4: Machine Learning and Computer Vision
- 5: Robot Learning: Closing the Reality Gap
- 6: Human-centric Machine Learning
- 7: Theory, Algorithms and Computations of Modern Learning Systems
- 8: Quantum and physics-based Machine Learning
- 9: Natural Intelligence
- 10: Health
- 11: Machine Learning in Earth and Climate Sciences
- 12: Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- 13: Multimedia / multimodal information
- 14: Information retrieval
- 15: Explainability and Fairness in Data Mining
- 16: Symbolic Machine Learning

### **Ideal Project**

The ideal project is the use case of machine learning technologies by SME (startup) to address one of the ELISE challenges. This project can be supported by the Advisor (mentor), who will create the linkage between industry and academia.

The expected initial TRL (Technology Readiness Level) should be TRL 6-7 while the initial IRL (Innovation Readiness Level) should be IRL 6-7.

Open Call dates (TBC): March 2021 - May 2021

## 12. Annex 6 - TEMPLATE for FSTP AGREEMENT

### TEMPLATE for FSTP AGREEMENT (Financial Support to Third Parties)

This Agreement aimed at providing financial support to third parties (or “Subgrant”), hereinafter referred to as the “Agreement”, is entered into by and between:

..... (*beneficiary representing the NoE*), organisation established and existing under the laws of ....., having its registered office at ..... .., herein represented by.... .., (*enter function*)

And

**THIRD PARTY NAME** (or “Subgrantee”), an organisation / a natural person, under the laws of **COUNTRY** having its registered office at **LEGAL ADDRESS**, herein represented by **NAME OF LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE** (*for legal entities*)

Hereinafter individually or collectively referred to as “Party” or “Parties”.

Whereas .... (party of NoE) has entered into a Grant Agreement effective as from (*enter date*), Grant Agreement n. ... (hereinafter “GA”), establishing a Network of Excellence named ... (*name of NoE*), (hereinafter “NoE”) and setting out the general terms and conditions and rights and obligations applicable to the specific grant awarded by the European Commission (hereinafter “EC”) for the specific action under H2020 framework programme;

Whereas the EC has awarded to the NoE a grant that includes a budget item dedicated to the financial support to third parties (hereinafter “FSTP”);

Whereas the Party ....., on behalf of the NoE, has published a *Call for proposals/applications* on (*dd/mm/yyyy*) through the (*mention the portal or any web site*) and, as a result, the Subgrantee has been selected to work and co-invest (*if that is the case*) with the NoE, as of communication sent to the Subgrantee on (*dd/mm/yyyy*);

Whereas in consideration of the satisfactory collaboration in place, Party .... is willing to provide financial support under the funding received from the EC to the Subgrantee for certain innovation, research or education activities carried out by the Subgrantee and (*in case of multiannual subgrants*) to renew said financial support each calendar year in accordance with the mentioned call features:

- the multi-annual accomplishments of the established programme (*if this is the case*),
- the outcomes of a stage-gate assessment process of the selected third party’s performance and achieved annual Key Performance Indicators (hereinafter KPIs) concerning the activities hereby granted;

Whereas Subgrantee is willing to receive such funding under the terms and conditions of article (*enter as appropriate*) of the GA and the terms and conditions of this Agreement;

Now therefore it has been agreed as follows:

## 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **Programme** means an innovation, research or education activity (as described under Attachment 1 to this Agreement) that supports the objectives of the NoE, partially or wholly funded by the NoE under the GA and carried out by the Subgrantee.
- 1.2 **Subgrant** means the financial support to be given to the Subgrantee in accordance with the terms and conditions of article ..... of the GA and the terms and conditions of this Agreement. For clarity: a subgrant is not a subcontract. This means that this agreement is not governed by a procurement or invoicing process.

## 2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBGRANT

- 2.1 The Subgrantee will take part in the Programme (*name of the initiative*) as described in Attachment 1 to this Agreement.  
The Subgrantee shall carry out the tasks according to Attachment 1 **from (enter date).... until ....** at the latest and shall report to Party ... on the activities' progress on a six-monthly basis.  
Such reports shall contain detailed information on the problems encountered and results generated by the Subgrantee.  
Party ... shall be entitled to include the main issues regarding the Programme according to Attachment 1 in its reporting towards the NoE governing bodies. Publications of such main issues shall require the Subgrantee's prior information.
- 2.2 Party ... shall give financial support for the Programme carried out by the Subgrantee, within the limits specified by the GA. The maximum amount of Subgrant under this Agreement is (*enter amount*) EUR and shall in any case never exceed (*enter amount*) EUR. The Subgrantee shall be entitled to claim eligible costs for the Programme in accordance with the following items: travel costs, accommodation costs, personnel costs, other direct costs and a flatrate indirect cost of 25% if the Programme is mainly accomplished at the Subgrantee's premises. For the full overview of the eligibility of the costs incurred, reference is made to Article (*enter as appropriate*) of the GA. The financial support shall take the form of a reimbursement of the proportion of the eligible costs of the Programme activities actually incurred.
- 2.3 The Subgrantee shall provide a cost report to Party ... as follows:
- **an intermediary report and supporting documents by (enter date)**
  - **a final report and supporting documents by (enter date).**
- 2.4 The Subgrantee shall use a cost reporting template to be provided by Party .... The following elements should at least be included in this cost report template:
- a) A description of the Programme activity implemented in accordance with Attachment 1;
  - b) A financial statement of costs actually incurred;
  - c) Detailed information with evidence on those costs actually incurred for the implementation of the Programme activities, as described in Attachment 1, that shows the eligibility of the costs.
- 2.5 Party ... will transfer the amount to the Subgrantee provided that the conditions listed in Section 2.3 are met by the Subgrantee. Except to the first partial payment defined herein, Party .... will transfer the amount of the Subgrant to the Subgrantee on the basis of a

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written payment request by the Subgrantee served by email, provided the terms and conditions of this Agreement are complied with.

- 2.6 Payments are due by Party ... as follows:
- 50% of the maximum amount under Clause 2.2 hereof, as advance payment, to be paid within 30 (thirty) days after signature of this Agreement;
  - the remaining amount, according to the Subgrantee cost report, to be paid after such cost report has been received and approved by Party ....

Reimbursements of personnel costs are dependent on the achievement of KPIs. The percentage of achievement is calculated by the average achievement rate across all activities outlined in Attachment 1 while the maximum rate for an individual activity cannot exceed 100%.

- An average achievement rate at or above 95% will yield the maximum reimbursement of personnel costs.
- An average achievement rate between 80% and 94% will reduce the reimbursement of personnel costs by 50%.
- Any average achievement rate below 80% will reduce the reimbursement of personnel costs by 80%.

For avoidance of doubt, the above mentioned reimbursement rates refer to the requested personnel funding, for a maximum of xxxx EUR, overheads included.

- 2.7 The Subgrantee shall comply in the execution of this Agreement with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including, but not limited to safety, security, welfare, social security and fiscal laws and regulations. Especially, Subgrantee shall not be entitled to act or to make legally binding declarations on behalf of Party ... and shall indemnify it from any third party claim resulting from a breach of these obligations.
- 2.8 The liability of Party ... under this Agreement shall in any case be limited to the amount of the financial support provided to Subgrantee hereunder and Party ... shall not in any case be liable for any indirect or consequential damages. This limitation of liability shall not apply in cases of wilful intent.
- 2.9 The Subgrantee shall fully and exclusively bear the risks in connection with the Programme activities for which financial support is granted. The Subgrantee shall indemnify Party ... for all damages, penalties, costs and expenses which Party ... as a result thereof would incur or have to pay to the EC or any third parties with respect to such Programme financially supported and/or for any damage in general which the EC incurs as a result thereof. In addition, should Party ... or the EC, in accordance with the GA, have a right to recovery regarding the financial support under this Agreement, the Subgrantee shall pay the sums in question in the terms and the date specified by Party ... or the EC, in execution of any request formulated by Party ... or the EC.

### 3. CONDITIONS FROM THE GA

Party ... receives funding from the EC and some of the obligations of Party ... under the GA have to be imposed on the Subgrantee, as reported in Attachment 2 to this Agreement. The Subgrantee acknowledges and agrees that these obligations will be fully applicable to it and shall do everything that is necessary in order to enable Party ... to comply with these obligations.



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The Subgrantee acknowledges and agrees that the EC, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) can exercise their rights under Articles (*enter as appropriate*) of the GA also towards the Subgrantee.

The Subgrantee acknowledges and agrees that Party's obligations under Articles (*enter as appropriate*) of the GA also apply to the Subgrantee.

#### **4. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

The Subgrantee acknowledges that if it claims rights to the results of the Programme activities, Party ... must ensure that the Subgrantee complies with its obligations under the GA.

In this case, Party ... must obtain all necessary rights (transfer, licences or other) from the Subgrantee, in order to be able to comply with its obligations as if those results were generated by Party ... itself.

#### **5. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Parties shall keep in confidence for the duration of this Agreement and for a period of 4 (four) years after the termination of this Agreement any technical or business information which was declared as confidential, and shall not disclose such information to third parties without the prior written consent of the owning Party. This obligation shall not apply to any information which is:

- proven to have been known to the receiving Party prior to the time of its receipt pursuant to this Agreement; or
- in the public domain at the time of disclosure to the receiving Party or thereafter enters the public domain without breach of the terms of this Agreement; or
- lawfully acquired by the receiving Party from an independent source having a bona fide right to disclose the same; or
- independently developed by an employee of the receiving Party who has not had access to any of the Confidential Information of the other Party.

The EC, as funding management authority, shall not be regarded as a third party.

#### **6. TERMINATION**

Each Party can terminate this Agreement with immediate effect through written notice to the other Party:

- 6.1 if the other Party is in breach of any of its material obligations under this Agreement, which breach is not remediable, or, if remediable, has not been remedied within 30 (thirty) days after written notice to that effect from the party not in breach;
- 6.2 if the other Party is declared bankrupt, is being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with its creditors, has suspended business activities, or is the subject of any other similar proceeding concerning those matters; or
- 6.3 if the other Party is subject to an event of force majeure, which prevents the other Party from correct performance of its obligations hereunder and such circumstances have lasted, or can reasonably be expected to last more than 3 (three) months.

#### **7. CONCLUDING CONDITIONS**

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- 7.1 Ancillary agreements, amendments, additions hereto shall be made in writing. This applies also if the requirement of the written form shall be waived.
- 7.2 Any subcontract by the Subgrantee concerning some of its tasks under this Agreement requires the prior written consent of Party ... and it shall not affect its own obligations resulting from this Agreement. The Subgrantee shall secure that the subcontractor shall comply with all obligations – as also established in the GA, and with regard to confidentiality – resulting from this Agreement and that the results attained by the subcontractor will be made available in accordance with Section 4 of this Agreement.
- 7.3 If any provision of this Agreement is determined to be illegal or in conflict with the applicable law, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not be affected. The ineffective provision shall be replaced by an effective provision which is equivalent.
- 7.4 This Agreement will come into force on the date of the last signature.
- 7.5 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of (*enter state as appropriate*).
- 7.6 Any disagreement or dispute which may arise in connection with this Agreement and which the Parties are unable to settle by mutual agreement will be brought before the courts of (*enter town as appropriate*).

Done in two original copies, one for each Party.

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Date:

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Date:

## Attachment 1 - Description of the Programme

Title	Description												
<b>1. Title of the Programme</b>													
<b>2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</b>													
<b>3. Key outputs and deliverables</b>	List and description of expected key measurable outputs and their expected date of delivery. It shall include also the list and description of tangible and verifiable deliverable(s) in year N.												
<b>4. Programme description / Work plan</b>	<p>Insert task names and description in details of the Subgrantee's work and expected outcomes and how they relate to the overall NoE project.</p> <p><b>A clear but short Programme summary</b> indicating the aim of the activity: e.g. what it is about and what the final outcome is; what is the added value over existing technology/solutions;</p> <p><b>The expected Programme duration</b> in terms of starting and closing dates (MM/YYYY – MM/YYYY).</p> <p><b>Description of the work</b> that is planned if the activity spans over several years, thus explaining what the long-term work planned is.</p> <p>It is recommended to identify risks and mitigations, or use SWOT analysis for larger Programmes.</p>												
<b>6. Key assumptions on the estimated costs</b>	<p>Enter total costs required</p> <p>The use of in-kind contributions against payment or free of charge, as well as the use of simplified cost methodologies (i.e. unit costs / lump sums) shall be clearly specified in the relevant cost categories.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cost Category</th><th>Programme costs</th><th>Explanation</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A Personnel</td><td></td><td>Enter FTE per profile For direct personnel costs, the estimated FTE per each profile shall be indicated for the personnel cost calculation</td></tr> <tr> <td>B Sub-contracting</td><td>(if any)</td><td>Description of subcontract</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other direct costs: D1 Travel and subsistence D2 Equipment, infrastructure or other assets</td><td></td><td>Enter description for D1, D2, D3 and provide information such as details on planned trips and events (D1), equipment items (D2) as well as type of goods/services (D3).</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Cost Category	Programme costs	Explanation	A Personnel		Enter FTE per profile For direct personnel costs, the estimated FTE per each profile shall be indicated for the personnel cost calculation	B Sub-contracting	(if any)	Description of subcontract	Other direct costs: D1 Travel and subsistence D2 Equipment, infrastructure or other assets		Enter description for D1, D2, D3 and provide information such as details on planned trips and events (D1), equipment items (D2) as well as type of goods/services (D3).
Cost Category	Programme costs	Explanation											
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Other direct costs: D1 Travel and subsistence D2 Equipment, infrastructure or other assets		Enter description for D1, D2, D3 and provide information such as details on planned trips and events (D1), equipment items (D2) as well as type of goods/services (D3).											

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	D3 Cost of other goods and service		
	E Indirect costs		According to applicable H2020 rules, <u>indirect costs</u> shall be calculated on flat-rate basis: a 25 % flat-rate applies to the eligible direct costs if the Subgrantee has accomplished the Programme mostly at its own premises.

## Attachment 2 - Conditions from the GA

Enter all articles of the NoE GA as appropriate, especially sections regarding the following relevant aspects:

- Checks, reviews, audits and investigations
- Monitoring and external evaluation of the NoE's output, results and impact
- Management of intellectual property
- Conflict of interests
- Confidentiality
- Visibility of the NoE and EU funding
- Liability for damages
- FSTP
- Consequences of non-compliance