

1. Eligibility

1. Who is eligible to apply for the Helmholtz AI call?

Only Helmholtz employees/scientists are eligible to apply, which means that they must have an employment contract with a Helmholtz center. Helmholtz AI projects shall combine substantial and reasonably balanced contributions from scientists from at least two Helmholtz centers. If you also meet all the other thematic and general requirements, you are eligible to apply for a project. In addition, other Helmholtz centers or external partners from research or industry can be involved. Please check our website [Helmholtz Associated Centers](#) for more information.

2. Is it possible to have two partners from the same Helmholtz center or do they have to be from different ones?

Two partners from the same Helmholtz centers are not allowed. At least two distinct Helmholtz centers must apply jointly. This is a hard formal condition as this grant aims at expanding network and collaboration between centers.

3. Can I apply through my university?

No. You cannot apply only through a university. To submit an application, scientists from at least two different Helmholtz centers have to be involved in the proposal. The university can be brought in as an external partner.

4. Can private companies apply to a project call?

As the main task of Helmholtz AI is to promote the development and distribution of AI methods across all Helmholtz centers, private companies cannot apply for projects on their own. However, it is possible for a private company – or any other external entity – to submit a project in cooperation with at least two research groups from the Helmholtz Association. If you want to do so, you will have to find suitable research groups as project partners and discuss further plans with them.

5. Can I participate in multiple proposals for the upcoming Helmholtz AI call?

Yes, it is possible to participate in different proposals. You should of course consider how to plan your staffing and matching for participation in different projects.

2. Timeline

1. How often will the Helmholtz AI project call be announced?

It will be announced once a year. The announcement takes place in August/September. The annual call with the deadline will be published again on our website at www.helmholtz.ai.

2. When is the final deadline for submission?

Please check the annual call announcement. Documents can be uploaded on the given date until midnight (12 am, CET).

3. When will the final funding decision be announced?

After a swift external review process, we aim for funding decisions for the 2022 project call to be announced by the end of Q1 2023. For every call there is a timeline with estimated dates, including for the funding decision.

4. What is the current Helmholtz AI project call criteria? How likely will the Helmholtz AI project call criteria change in the future?

The Helmholtz AI steering board reviews the Helmholtz AI project call criteria annually. To stay up-to-date, please check the Helmholtz AI project call and template document each year.

3. Proposal documents

1. What is the format of the CV?

There is no specific format or template for the CV. The CV should be written in English and should be scientific in nature. Please note that your CV should also contain references to relevant accomplishments beyond scientific papers and citation metrics (e.g. software packages, policy papers, standards, datasets, patent filings, entrepreneurship, and industry collaborations).

2. Where do I find a proposal template and INF guidelines?

Please check our website [Project Call 2022](#) for all project call related documentation and information. All criteria are listed in the main document. We do not have any additional guidelines from the INF.

3. Can I add a reference list or appendix in the main body of the proposal?

The proposal's main body is limited to 5 pages. It is best to use these 5 pages for the most important points. The (short) bibliography/references should ideally be included in the main body for better readability; however, if this exceeds the 5-page limit, you can of course move the references to the appendix. There is a tab "additional documents" in

the application tool where you can attach a reference list or appendix.

4. How detailed should the work packages be described in the appendix?

The work packages should be described briefly as:

- a) A goal-describing title or sentence ('objective')
- b) An outline of the tasks (1 to approx. 5) using key points/key words ('tasks')

The deliverables can be described in a descriptive sentence (e.g. 'provision of dataset on xyz platform' or 'publication of benchmarked algorithms').

5. Where do I submit the abstract?

The abstract needs only to be submitted in the online submission system.

6. Where can I find PoF-IV research fields?

Please visit the website of [Research Fields - Helmholtz](#) for more information.

7. How/when should deliverables/milestones be reported?

Reporting is required once per year. It is not required to share each deliverable/milestone.

3.1 Online Application portal

1. How can we upload the document in the application portal?

You can upload the document in the application portal via the following steps:

- 1) Please login to the application portal.
- 2) Go to "my proposals".
- 3) Choose your project.
- 4) Choose the menu "documents" and upload the document (pdf) there.

2. Who can register and submit the application?

The main contact person of the project can register and submit the application. The coordinating PI or scientific coordinator can also do so.

3.2 Support Letters

1. Who is required to sign the letter of support?

A letter of support is needed from each of the participating Helmholtz centers. As described in the call, the letters have to be signed by the center's board of directors. A letter from the head of the institute is unfortunately not sufficient.

2. Do we need to provide a letter of intent from our industrial partners?

It is not required to provide a letter of intent from your industrial partner. It is sufficient to describe your partner's contribution in the application text, but of course a letter of intent could strengthen the application.

3. Does the original letter from the Board need to be mailed, or will a scan suffice?

A scanned copy is sufficient for the application.

4. Partners / Collaborations

1. What is the maximum number of PIs and experts that can join a proposal?

The maximum number of PIs that can be registered in the project portal is 8. One of the PIs has to be registered as the coordinating PI (you can do this in the online application form) and at least 2 PIs need to be from two different Helmholtz centers.

The maximum number of external experts is 6.

2. Who can be an external partner?

Academic institutions, companies or non-profits can be external partners.

3. Are external partners expected to contribute financially?

There are no financial contributions expected from external partners.

4. Do potential external partners make their own contract with Helmholtz AI or are these partners handled as subcontractors of one of the Helmholtz centers which submit the proposal?

Helmholtz AI will only make a contract with the submitting Helmholtz centers. The centers must take care of the communication with the external partners.

5. How do we identify a suitable project partner at another Helmholtz center for the Helmholtz AI call?

Firstly, please visit our website [Helmholtz Associated Centers](#) for more information on Helmholtz centers and partners.

Secondly, we suggest that you engage with us. For example, i) attend our events, ii) work with consultants, iii) check AI associates.

Finally, we aim to establish a collaborative workspace for prospective partners to network; further news to follow.

6. Is it advantageous to have industrial partners? Would we need an IP statement?

As projects are for early, high risk/high gain projects, industry/SME partners are not required. However, it may be advantageous to include such a partner if it fits into your project design. For IP issues we strongly recommend that you talk to the experts at your center/host institution.

7. Do both of the Helmholtz centers need to focus on AI methods, or can the goal also be the transfer of knowledge of AI methods from center 1 to center 2?

Both are valid. The original idea was to bring method expertise and domain data together to confer knowledge to both sides.

8. Does the lead researcher have to be a PI? Can a non-permanent employee be an applicant (and PI)?

There are no restrictions; important is the ability to procure a letter from the center's board vouching for matching funds. You should be able/allowed to host your own projects depending on the governance of your host institution and on your qualification.

9. Is it possible to incorporate an existing consultation with Helmholtz AI into the application?

It is possible and highly encouraged. Asking if consultants are involved and can be part of the project is part of the application form.

5. Israel partnership

1. Is every institution in Israel eligible for this call? Or is there a pre-compiled list of institutions which are eligible?

An application must come from at least two Helmholtz centers, i.e., the Israeli partner cannot apply alone or as the lead. Every Israeli institution doing research (e.g. a private company or research center) is eligible as a partner. It just needs to be a purposeful collaboration with Helmholtz centers, e.g., a domain scientist from Israel could collaborate with Helmholtz centers, with the data being the contribution coming from the Israeli partner. Their contribution must be unique, with justification for needing the partner to achieve objectives and deliverables of the project.

2. Are Israeli partners funded or is the budget solely reserved for German centers?

No money can be assigned to an Israeli partner.

3. How can I find a suitable Israeli partner?

If you already have a Helmholtz partner, but are interested in an Israeli partner, get in contact with us and we will try to provide potential collaborators based on existing co-operations in your field.

6. Finance

- 1. Is the 200K from INF the total budget for all participating centers? Or each center gets 200K from INF?**

The 200k from INF is the budget ceiling for the entire project, i.e. for all participating centers. It would have to be complemented by at least the same amount in matching money as is common for all INF funded projects.
- 2. Where is the 200k matching money coming from? Helmholtz core function or can it be third party funding?**

Third party funding cannot be used for matching funds, based on the rules of the (most) funding agencies.
- 3. Is it possible to concentrate the funding on 1 center?**

Contribution must be (mostly) balanced, e.g. 70/30 is the maximum imbalance.
- 4. What elements are not eligible for funding?**

Data collection, preparation, cleaning or validation. Moreover, no funding for investments (e.g., GPU hardware, infrastructure).
- 5. What counts as in-kind funding?**

This could include contribution of work hours of funded staff, data or compute time with a plausible cost report.

7. Miscellaneous

- 1. Do you have any tips for successful applications?**

Read the entire Project Call application and follow the instructions carefully. Pay close attention to the scoring criteria. When writing your proposal, be clear and concise, and establish your major points in a logical way. A lot depends on the way you represent your main project objectives. The goals of the project should be clear and the milestones/deliverables should be clearly mentioned.
- 2. Where can I find successful project applications from previous years?**

You can find successful projects from previous years on our website [Successfully Funded Projects](#).
- 3. What is the necessary scope for funding? Is only the development of AI-functionality fundable or also its assurance for safety-critical use-cases?**

The panel consists of groups of experts not focused on a particular domain; if you present a good case, it will likely be recognised as important. As an example, ethics in AI is more emphasized this year, so safety-critical use-cases are likely to be of interest.

4. Do the applications get reviewed by the same set of reviewers, or are the reviewers different?

A number of proposals will be assigned to each reviewer to review; all proposals will be reviewed by several reviewers. The ranking is then determined in a structured discussion by the entire panel of reviewers.

5. We/I have been awarded a Helmholtz AI Project in the past. Is it possible to apply for a follow-up project which would build upon the progress we have made so far?

From an administrative (INF) perspective, it is possible to be funded multiple times. The new application would need to convince the panel on the basis of the call criteria. It should be ensured, for example, that it is a truly novel, high-risk and high-gain project, that the composition of the project partners makes sense or, where necessary for expertise/implementation, could be flexibly adapted.