

Application Guidelines and Conditions for Funding Collaborative Projects in Applied AI Research

In What Format and to Whom Should the Application be Submitted?

The application, along with its attachments, should be compiled into a single PDF document that includes all the required documents as per the application guidelines. The application should be addressed to the Technology Industries of Finland (hereinafter TIF) at:

Email: johtoryhma@teknologiateollisuus.fi

What Should the Application Include?

The application must include at least the following:

1. A project description of the collaborative applied research project and a publishable summary of the project's content and objectives.
2. A job description for the recruited postdoc researcher, including educational and experience requirements. If the individual is already known, include their comprehensive CV.
3. A memorandum of understanding between the company/companies and the university/research institution, containing at least the following sub-items:

- Project description with a complete timeline.
- A publishable summary of the project description.
- Biannual project goals and monitoring indicators.
- Agreement on the IP rights of the research results, ensuring that the company/group of companies owns the research results and has free access to all background material required to utilize the results.
- A quantitative assessment of the research and teaching work conducted at the university, and/or supervision of theses.

4. An estimate of total salary costs, the amount of grant requested (up to 50% of salary costs, including direct social costs), and the entities to which the grant from TIF will be paid. It is recommended to establish two employment contracts with the researcher to facilitate IP rights agreements.
5. A description of the expected competitive and growth impacts of the project on the company/group of companies.

The company must specify in the application which parts of the application are confidential.

What Are the Evaluation Criteria for Applications?

The applications will be evaluated based on:

1. The significance of the applied research to the company/group of companies (impact on competitiveness and growth).
2. The content and public nature of the research conducted at the university (broader societal impacts).
3. The competency requirements of the recruited individual (impact on increasing AI expertise in Finland).
4. The extent of the recruited researcher's teaching work and/or thesis supervision (impact on disseminating AI expertise in Finland).
5. The selected researcher's competence: postdoctoral experience in applied AI research, collaboration with companies, publication activities, and received recognitions (researcher's suitability for company-driven applied research, considering geopolitical risks).

What is the Minimum Competence Requirement for the Recruited Researcher?

The minimum experience requirement for the recruit is a PhD in computer science, statistics, electrical engineering, mathematics, or another relevant field, with at least three years of relevant work experience post-PhD in machine learning, statistics, AI, or a related field.

Who Participates in the Evaluation of Applications?

Representatives from TIF, TIF's Centennial Foundation, and independent universities/research institutions will evaluate the applications and summarize the evaluation report with recommendations for presentation to the working committee of the Board of TIF.

Are Applications Confidential?

Yes, the evaluators will treat the applications as confidential. The summary of the project description is public, as is the summary of the evaluation report, which will not disclose any material marked as confidential by the company.

Does the Recruited Researcher Need to be Identified at the Application Stage?

No. If the postdoc researcher for the project is not yet selected at the time of the application, any potential approval decision will be conditional. The final approval will be

made once the CV of the selected researcher is available and evaluated. The CV must be presented to TIF within six months of the application.

Is a Contract Made for the Funding of the Research Project?

Yes. A contract will be made for an approved project between TIF, the applicant company/group of companies, and the partner university/research institution. The contract is based on the project application and the project decision made by the working committee of the TIF Board.

How is the Project Reported?

The company and the university will jointly report the progress of the research project to TIF every six months. However, significant changes related to the project must be reported immediately.

In the semi-annual report:

- The achievement of the biannual sub-goals presented in the project application is evaluated using the indicators describing them.
- The realization of the competitiveness and growth impacts presented in the application is assessed within the company.
- A summary of the research and teaching work conducted by the researcher at the university is presented.

Is the Applied Research Conducted in the Company Public?

No. After the project concludes, the company and university will publish a summary of the research, which will be public.

How Does TIF Pay the Grant?

TIF pays its share of the funding biannually in arrears based on the achievement of objectives.

Can Payments be Suspended?

Payments can be suspended entirely or partially by the decision of the working committee of TIF Board if the interim objectives of the research project are not achieved.

What Happens if a Company in the Funded Group Withdraws or Ceases Operations During the Research Project?

TIF will assess the impact of the change on the content and impact of the research project and make a decision proposal to the Board working committee regarding possible changes to the project's payments.

What Happens if the Recruited Researcher Leaves the Project?

TIF will suspend payments. If a comparable or better replacement researcher is not recruited within six months, the payments will be stopped.

Does TIF Pay Half of the Direct Salary Costs Including Social Costs if the Actual Salary Costs are Higher Than Requested?

No. TIF will pay up to the amount requested in the application.

Will TIF Pay the Full Amount Requested if the Actual Direct Salary Costs Including Social Costs are Lower Than in the Application?

No. TIF will pay up to 50% of the actual direct salary costs, including social costs.