Foundations of Trustworthy AI – Integrating Reasoning, Learning and Optimization
TAILOR
Grant Agreement Number 952215
Connectivity Fund

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Short description	This document describes the setup of the TAILOR Connectivity Fund, the requirements for third party funding, the dissemination of the call, and the formation of the scientific evaluation board.
NOTE	1. At the time of writing, one additional scientific evaluation board member still has to be approved. 2. While the website is online, we are still in the process of announcing the connectivity fund through as many channels as possible.

Document History			
Revision	**Date**	**Modification**	**Author**
1.0	25/11/2020	first version	Joaquin Vanschoren

Document Review		
Reviewer	**Institution**	**Date and result of Review**
Fredrik Heintz	Linkoping University	30/11/2020
Peter Flach	Bristol University	30/11/2020

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Useful links

Hosted website for the connectivity fund:
https://tailor-eu.github.io/connectivity-fund/

Goals

The purpose of TAILOR project is to build a strong academic-public-industrial research **network** with the capacity of providing the scientific basis for **Trustworthy** AI leveraging and combining learning, optimization and reasoning for realizing AI systems that incorporate the safeguards that make them in the **reliable**, **safe**, **transparent** and **respectful** of human agency and expectations.

The TAILOR network already includes many of Europe's top AI labs. However, we also want to reach out to the many other excellent labs and organizations across Europe to work together and create new breakthroughs in AI. The Connectivity Fund is a key instrument in this mission. To establish a truly vibrant network, the Connectivity Fund provides funding to AI researchers from across Europe for research visits or workshops that bring together researchers from TAILOR labs and non-TAILOR labs. It especially aims to support young researchers to gain valuable experience and nurture the next generation of AI researchers.

The Connectivity Fund is a 1.75M EUR fund, of which 1.5M EUR is Third Party Funding, and hence only available to non-TAILOR beneficiaries. An open call has been issued that is open to all European AI researchers. This part of the fund is managed by TUE.

The remaining part of the funding, 0.25M EUR, is for within-network collaboration, in agreement with the activities of Work Package 9. This part of the fund is managed by LIU. Applications for within-TAILOR funding go through the same review process, but are specially marked.

Scope

The connectivity fund is open to all European AI researchers. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that they work in Europe (in a European institution) and are active in AI through their publication record, or using other proof of involvement in AI research projects. They need to formulate an original proposal to do excellent Trustworthy AI research, and have an invitation letter from their hosting lab. The focus of the Connectivity Fund lies on connecting TAILOR and non-TAILOR labs. Hence, applications should be from a European non-TAILOR lab and interested in visiting a TAILOR lab. Vice versa, non-TAILOR labs are allowed to request funding to invite a visitor from a TAILOR lab. Workshops can be hosted by either TAILOR or non-TAILOR labs, but only non-TAILOR attendants can receive funding. Applications for within-TAILOR funding do not have these constraints. In that case, both the guest and visitor should be from a TAILOR lab.
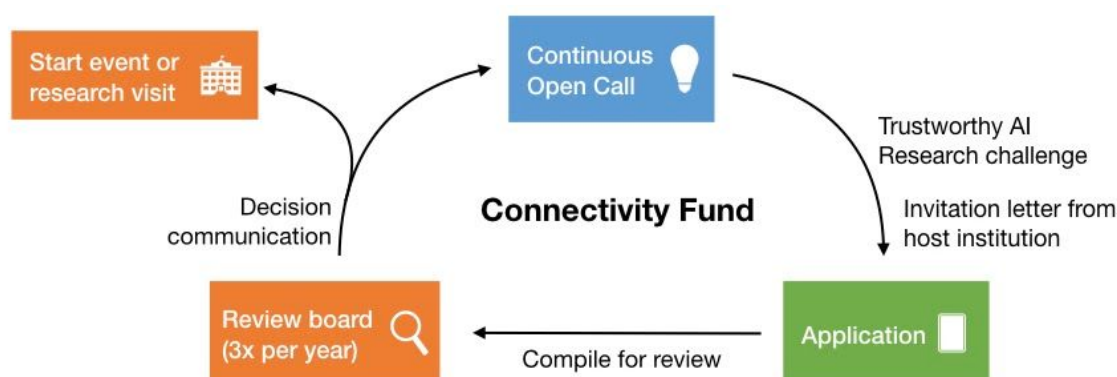
Research Visits

The connectivity fund supports research visits between 1 and 12 months. Such visits should help researchers gain experience and world-wide recognition by working in excellent labs (scientific step-up). Ideally, the visit also brings in expertise from outside the TAILOR network (scientific influx) and/or align different European AI initiatives (scientific alliance).

Workshops

The Connectivity Fund also supports workshops that bring people across Europe together to solve hard problems in an open atmosphere. Workshops should explicitly bring TAILOR and Non-TAILOR researchers together. Such workshops should facilitate scientific exchange with the worldwide AI community to tackle big challenges in AI. Alternatively, we welcome workshops aimed at providing a swift and coordinated reaction to urgent breaking developments, and to build bridges with other European AI initiatives, such as other European Networks of Excellence in AI. One can apply for workshops in two ways: either as a non-TAILOR host (using third-party funding), or as a TAILOR host (using the within-network funding). Workshop can potentially invite and reimburse key international researchers attending the workshop.

Organization

The connectivity fund uses a continuous open call. Every 4 months, proposals are ranked by the scientific evaluation board. The overall process is shown in the figure below.

Timing

Applicants can submit at any time through an online application detailed on the website. Proposals will be collected and ranked every year according to the following schedule. The latest possible submission is 15th of March 2023. The funds need to be spent before August 31st, 2023.

- 15th of March (anywhere on earth). For visits/workshops starting 1st of May or later. Notification by 15th of April.
- 15th of July (anywhere on earth). For visits/workshops starting 1st of September or later. Notification by 15th of August.
- 15th of November (anywhere on earth). For visits/workshops starting 1st of January or later. Notification by 15th of December.

Amount of funding, limitations, and spreading

The Connectivity Fund supports visits and workshops up to 15.000 EUR per proposal. A higher amount could be requested provided that a good motivation is provided. The fund only covers travel, housing, and sustenance. Only actually made and proven expenses are reimbursed. Expenses are capped using the standard per diem rate for Dutch Universities. In addition, per third-party beneficiary, no more than 60.000 EUR (or 4 visits) can be granted. For further details, see the Third Party Funding regulations below.

We aim to support 100 third-party visits/workshops over 3 years. We have capped the spending to Maximum spending: 500k EUR in year 1, 1250k EUR in year 2, 1500k EUR in year 3. The within-network visits or workshops are spread out similarly. We aim to support around 17 of such applications.

Risk mitigation because of COVID-19

The first granted research visits and workshops will start after the 1st of May 2021. It is possible that, even at that time, there may be COVID-19 related travel restrictions. Therefore, we allow that visits are postponed by up to 6 months whenever official travel restrictions make travel impossible.

Application procedure

Applications should prepare a short proposal. Maximum length: 5 pages, 11 point, 1" margins, not including references/appendices.
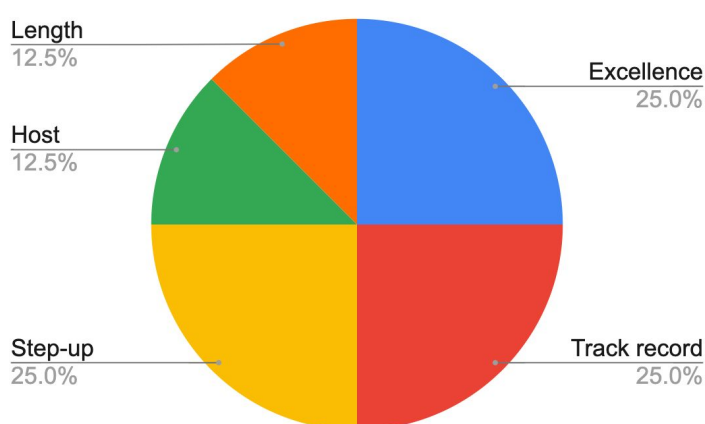
A proposal template is provided:
- Title, abstract, keywords, scientific area
- AI Excellence (max 4 pages)
    - Introduction: Significance of proposed research and prior work
    - Methods: Technical approach
    - Expected Results: Including milestones with timeline estimates. This could include datasets, code release, tech reports, publications, presentations, etc.
- Impact: How will the visit impact the researcher (e.g. their career) and the scientific community?
- Execution: Motivation for the choice of host lab, visit duration, and starting date.
- Funds needed: Requested amount, including estimates of main expenses.
- Additional information: Anything else that the evaluators should know about the applicants (e.g. personal information), the host, or the proposed research?

In the appendices, Applicants need to submit their Curriculum Vitae (CV) and an invitation letter from the host lab explicitly stating that they will host the applicant during the indicated period.

Application platform

At the moment, we follow a traditional application procedure whereby applicants upload their proposal to a proposal reviewing platform. This platform is currently Easychair, based in the UK. However, in collaboration with WP9, we will explore and possibly create alternative, AI-driven infrastructures to submit and review papers and proposals. These could be self-hosted and include better services such as automated quality checks, automated reviewer assignment, continuous evaluation, intermediate feedback, etc. Whenever these are available, and approved by the TAILOR Executive Board, we can update the application platform.

Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated on the following points, using the respective weights shown in the graph above.

● AI Excellence (25%). How does the visit contribute to AI research and/or help integrate current research in learning, optimisation and reasoning towards that goal?
● Scientific track record (25%). The applicant's prior achievements, taking into account scientific age and personal situation.
● Scientific step-up (25%). How does the visit help the applicant grow professionally and establish a worldwide reputation? For workshops: how does the workshop help the participants?
● Suitability of the host (12.5%). Is the host lab appropriate? Is it the best place to do the proposed research? The connectivity fund is primarily meant for cross border visits and for expanding the impact of the network to European scale.
● Suitability of the visit length (12.5%). Is the visit length appropriate and realistic? This takes into account the applicant's personal and family situation. I.e. applicants with families may motivate a shorter research visit and more remote preparation and follow-up.

During submission, applications can choose a preferred evaluator for their proposal from the scientific evaluation board. They are informed that the actual reviewer may be different as we aim to evenly distribute the evaluation load.

Proposals must achieve a minimum of 70% of the maximal score to receive funding. Further details are below, in the section on third party finding.

Eligibility

All European AI researchers are eligible. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that they work in Europe (at a European institution) and are active in AI through their publication record, or using other proof of involvement in AI research projects.

The third-party funding portion of the fund can only reimburse non-TAILOR participants. Hence, applicants should either be from a non-TAILOR lab and interested in visiting a TAILOR lab. Or, they should be from a TAILOR lab, and be invited by a non-TAILOR lab. In practice, this means that, if applicants are employed by a non-TAILOR lab, they submit the application themselves. People working at a TAILOR lab can only be invited to visit a non-TAILOR lab, in which case the non-TAILOR lab needs to submit the application.

Workshops can be hosted by either TAILOR or non-TAILOR labs. Non-TAILOR attendants can receive third-party funding. TAILOR labs need to apply for the within-network funding.

[The full list of TAILOR Labs is available on the connectivity fund website](). This includes all TAILOR project beneficiaries, including linked third parties.

Scientific Evaluation Board

The following people are on the initial scientific evaluation board, and approved by the TAILOR General Assembly on the 2nd of November 2020. Every scientific field in the TAILOR project has proposed two members. Two additional members were nominated to review inter-network proposals (linked to WP9). Scientific Board Members are appointed for one year, after which their term can be extended up to three years. The complete list, including biographies, is also available on the [connectivity fund website.]() In alphabetical order:

- Giovanni Casini, National Research Council of Italy
- Sašo Džeroski, Jozef Stefan Institute, Slovenia
- Peter Flach, Bristol University, UK
- Hector Geffner, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain
- Marco Gori, Sienna University, Italy
- Jose Hernandez-Orallo, Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain
- Catholijn Jonker, Delft University, Netherlands
- Gerhard Lakemeyer, Aachen University, Germany
- Andrea Passerini, Trento University, Italy

- Marie-Christine Rousset, Laboratoire d'Informatique de Grenoble, France
- Carles Sierra, Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (IIIA-CSIC), Spain
- Joaquin Vanschoren, Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands

One additional member has been proposed, but yet has to be confirmed in the next Executive Board Meeting.

- Mitra Baratchi, Leiden University, Netherlands

Third Party Funding

This section details the formal third party funding regulations, as per the consortium agreement (Annex K). They are in line with what was previously discussed in this document and listed here for completeness. They only apply to the third-party funding (1.5M EUR), not the within-network funding (0.25M EUR).

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, as stipulated above. 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.
- **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 third partner is limited to 60.000 EUR. The target amount per visit or workshop is 15.000 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.

Administration

The TUE has hired a secretary to oversee the smooth running of the connectivity fund, to answer questions, prepare the scientific evaluation board meetings, collect expense

declarations, and report on the progress and outcomes of the call to the TAILOR programme manager.

The outcome of the open call will be published every 4 months without delay, including a description of the third party action, the date of the award, duration, and the legal name and country.

Appendix 1: Website

The website for the open call is currently https://tailor-eu.github.io/connectivity-fund, but may change. It is hosted on an open source platform, and the code for the website is available on the same platform. Below are screenshots at the time of submission of this document.

Landing page:

Detailed Information page:

Scientific board page:

Andrea Passerini,
Trento University, Italy

Andrea Passerini is associate professor at DISI and Adjunct Professor at Aalborg University. He is director of the Structured Machine Learning Group and coordinator of the Research Program on Deep and Structured Machine Learning, both at DISI. His research interests include structured machine learning, statistical relational learning, explainable and interactive machine learning, preference elicitation and learning with constraints. He co-authored over 100 refereed papers, including 40 journal articles, and he regularly publishes at top AI conferences and journals like AAAI, IJCAI, AIJ and MLJ.

Marie-Christine Rousset
Laboratoire d'Informatique de Grenoble, France

Marie-Christine Rousset is a Professor of Computer Science, member of the LIG (Laboratory of Informatics in Grenoble), at the University of Grenoble Alpes in France. Her areas of research are Knowledge Representation, Information Integration and the Semantic Web. She is co-responsible of the chair 'Explanable and Responsible AI' within the MIAI Grenoble Institute of AI.

Carles Sierra
Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (IIIA-CSIC), Spain

Carles Sierra is Director of the Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (IIIA) of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) located in Barcelona. He is a Fellow of the European Association of AI, EurAI, and its current President. He was the recipient of the ACM/SIGAI Autonomous Agents Research Award in 2019. He organized IJCAI in 2011 in Barcelona and was the President of the IJCAI Program Committee in 2017 in Melbourne.

Proposal submission platform (Easychair):