Foundations of Trustworthy AI – Integrating Reasoning, Learning and Optimization
TAILOR
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Connectivity Fund

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Short description	This deliverable repeats every 4 months and presents regular updates about the outcomes of the open call of the connectivity fund.

Document History			
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Document Review		
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Useful links

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

Summary of current status

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 goals, scope, organization, scientific evaluation board, and third party funding specifications have been described in deliverable 10.1 and have remained unchanged, with one clarification about how payments are made (also reported in D10.3) and discussed further below in the section on the Funding Procedure.

This series of deliverables provides updates on the status of the connectivity fund every 4 months. It will detail the number of submissions, the evaluation process, and the outcomes, funded visits and workshops, and financial status of the connectivity fund will be reported in a transparent way. This report summarizes the outcome of the first cut-off of the continuous open call, which closed on the 15th of July, 2021. The next cut-off will be 15th of November, 2021

Applications received

Because of the COVID19 pandemic, and the impossibility or uncertainty around research visits and in-person events, the response to the call was very low. The Connectivity Fund only covers costs related to in-person visits, which are currently only possible for a few edge cases. These include within-country research visits and in-situ workshops planned later this year under the assumption that travel restrictions will be lifted. Most other candidates decided to delay their application until travel restrictions are officially lifted.

We received the following applications in this reporting period. The proposal IDs and titles are:
4. AI4SMB, also named in German as KI4KMU, to open AI processing to SMB within EU
5. Design of Matheuristic Techniques for Timetabling Problems

Based on the amount of inquiries we are receiving, we are expecting more proposals to come in before our next cut-off (November 15th, 2021). Moreover, as we expect the COVID situation to improve in late 2021, we will advertise the connectivity fund heavily before the next round (cut-off date March 15th, 2022).

Review process and outcome

Proposals were collected via the Easychair platform. First, all applications submitted within the deadline were evaluated for formal eligibility by the call management. The eligibility criteria were specified in deliverable D10.1. Only the first proposal passed the eligibility test. The other one did not contain any scientific proposal.

Next, each proposal was reviewed by a member of the scientific board. We checked for any conflicts of interest in the assignment. The final results of the evaluation are summarized in Table 1. All proposals were evaluated according to 5 criteria (AI excellence, scientific track record of the candidate, scientific step-up, and the suitability of the host and activity duration). Further details on these can also be found in deliverable D10.1.

Proposal ID	AI Excellence	Science track record	Science step-up	Host lab	Visit length	Weighted Final Score	TAILOR lab	non-TAILOR lab (recipient)	Planned starting date	Requested funding (EUR)
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	ineligible
5	9	7	8	8	8	8	IIIA, Barcelona	University of Udine	1/9/2021	14,940 EUR

Table 1. Overview of TAILOR Connectivity fund applications and their evaluation.

Scores per criteria are on a scale from 0-10:

- **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.

As per the Connectivity Fund rules, proposals must achieve a minimum of 70% of the maximal score to receive funding. All eligible applications passed this threshold. The total requested funding is also well within the budget earmarked for the first year of the activity fund (500k EUR divided over 4 cut-offs). Based on these outcomes, this application was accepted for funding.

Funding procedure

We have finalized the subcontracts to award FSTP, closely following the H2020 regulations on FSTP, our proposal's annex K, and the VISION Vademecum on FSTP (VISION Deliverable D3.1). We've been coordinating with the VISION Coordination and Support Action to arrive at a valid subcontract.

Further clarifying the funding procedure discussed in D10.3:

- The recipient is responsible for submitting a cost report with estimates of all eligible costs, which is to be approved before the start of the proposed visit or workshop.
- The funding is provided as a lump sum in two slices: one slice of 60% at the start of the visit, and 40% after approval of the final technical report and cost report.
- In case that the actual costs are lower than the estimate, only the actual costs will be reimbursed. In case that the actual costs are lower than the advance payment, the subgrantee must reimburse part of the advance payment to match the actual costs.
- The recipient third party (subgrantee) must ensure that proof of actual costs are kept for the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) for a period of 5 years.

The full text of the Sub-Grant agreement is appended to the deliverable as a separate document.