



Call for submissions idea contest "AI is what we make it!"

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1 Goals

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) is honouring outstanding ideas for the development and implementation of innovative uses of AI for the common good through the idea contest "AI is what we make it!"¹ The award is for ideas that are jointly submitted by project partners from different areas (business, science, administration, civil society) with their respective knowledge, experience and capabilities (cf. point 4). The prize money and the support in the form of topic-specific workshops are meant to facilitate the further development of the basic idea into a plan eligible for funding.

AI-based technologies are increasingly used both in everyday life and in the world of work. The *Civic Innovation Platform* (CIP) of the Policy Lab Digital, Work & Society of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs aims to create space for civil society development and use of AI as a technology oriented towards the common good. Sets of tools to support innovation processes are being developed that are oriented towards the common good from concept to implementation: The multifunctional online platform (www.civic-innovation.de) can be used to find potential project partners in an "ideas market" via the matching function. As part of the project the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is also providing funding and is organising advisory events, networking events and thematic workshops.

The successful development of uses for AI requires not only special technological know-how but also in-depth knowledge in the respective social context as well as knowledge of available data sets and their potential uses. With this in mind, the *Civic Innovation Platform* promotes close networking of actors from society, business, research and administration: AI start-ups, SMEs, associations, clubs and trade unions, educational

¹ The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' understanding of "artificial intelligence" (AI) is in line with the understanding expressed in the Federal Government's AI strategy. It states: "The Federal Government's strategy is based on the use of AI to solve problems, and thus on the positions of the 'weak' AI" - Source: <https://www.ki-strategie-deutschland.de/home.html>.

institutions, cooperatives and research institutions, as well as administrations and local authorities.

Private individuals and civil society actors, in particular, but also start-ups and small companies, often lack the necessary resources to develop their promising ideas for AI innovations that are oriented towards the common good. The idea contest aims to support existing potential and contribute to a collaborative, creative free space for AI-based social innovation.

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With the idea contest, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs supports the conceptual development of ideas for the use of AI focusing on people and the common good across the entire spectrum of social and labour policy (cf. point 4) The goal is to leverage the knowledge and creative potential that exists in various places by facilitating the cooperation of as many different actors as possible. The idea contest is part of the project *Civic Innovation Platform* (CIP), which receives funds from the Federal Government's AI strategy, is open to all innovative ideas for the development and/or adaptation of uses of AI with a clear focus on the common good within the remit of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (cf. point 4).

2.1 Prize money

In each round of the competition, up to 30 ideas can be awarded prize money of up to 20,000 euros each. The prize money is to be earmarked for the further conceptual development of the idea and will be paid out in three tranches if the following conditions are met: The first tranche of 10,000 euros will be paid out when the award is given. A condition for payment is participation in the award ceremony and the subsequent networking workshop to get to know the other award-winning projects and to make contacts for mutual advice and support. The interim results of the project teams will be presented and discussed after a few months. A condition for payment of the second tranche of 7,500 euros is participation in the interim presentation event. Payment of the third tranche of 2,500 euros will be made upon submission of a finished plan or status report.

2.2 State aid rules

The prize money is State aid in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid Text with EEA relevance, as amended. De minimis aid may not exceed 200,000 euros over three fiscal years.

2.3 Support of the project partners

In addition to financial support, the award-winning projects receive further support in the form of offers for workshops and coaching as required. This includes, for example, support in areas such as data science, data management, data protection and data security, as well as on topics such as agile project management, and applying for and managing grants. The award winners are thus to be given support for developing the outline of their idea into a plan eligible for funding, which can either be submitted within the framework of a Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs funding programme or can qualify for other funding programmes. The workshops also serve to promote networking and the exchange of ideas among the award winners.

2.4 Conditions of Participation

The competition is open to groups of normally up to four natural and/or legal persons which have all registered on the www.civic-innovation.de website. The cooperating partners can get together via the portal and submit an idea for the competition jointly using the platform. The ideas must be posted on the *Civic Innovation Platform's ideas market prior to submission*. The submissions must be in either German or English. The idea must be about a utilisation of AI that can be realised in Germany or Europe. Responsible applicants (authorized representatives) designated by the team must be located in Germany.

2.5 How to apply?

Submissions to the idea contest "AI is what we make it!" should be collaboratively developed ideas. The submissions must clearly show what contribution the idea makes to the common good, what the technical basis is and why it is innovative. How the idea is transferable to others should also be demonstrated. Its connection to the remit of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs must be clear.

The submission includes:

- the **outline of the idea**,
- a **cooperation agreement** between the project partners involved designating to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs a responsible applicant (authorised representative) for the submission and explaining the basis for cooperation between the project partners. All project partners must have registered for the password-protected community area on the website www.civic-innovation.de, and
- a legally binding **statement** that, in the event of receiving an award, the prize money will be used for the of further developing the project idea into an eligible plan.

Submissions are to be made directly via the website www.civic-innovation.de. Other ways of submission - such as by post or e-mail - are not possible.

Correspondence will be conducted with the responsible applicant (authorised representative) designated by the team. The receipt of the contest entries will be confirmed by e-mail.

There is no legal entitlement to an award or to the reimbursement of any expenses.

3 Application deadlines

The deadline for submissions for the next round of the idea contest is 15 September 2021. One round of the competition is planned for each of the years 2021 and 2022. The dates will be published on the platform in advance.

The deadline for submissions is at **11:59 PM** of the specified date.

3.1 Exclusion from participation

Employees of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and their family members are not allowed to participate in the competition. Projects that are already receiving federal funding are also excluded from participation in the idea contest.

3.2 Contact

Questions about the idea contest can be sent by e-mail to civic-innovation@bmas.bund.de.

Our service hotline is also available to answer all questions regarding the idea contest on weekdays from Monday to Friday from 09.00 - 18.00 on 0800 - 808 11 20.

3.3 Obligations

By submitting an idea, the persons involved certify the accuracy of the information provided. They certify that the submitted contribution does not infringe on rights of any third party.

4 How are award winners selected?

A prerequisite for successful participation in the idea contest is a contribution to the innovative structuring of work and society using AI; the selection of prizes for ideas will be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to one or more topics in the remit of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (basic prerequisite) (cf. point 4.1)
- Interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral project partnership (basic prerequisite) (cf. point 4.2)
- Expected added value / benefit for the common good
- Planned use of AI technology
- Innovative and model character of the project idea
- Sustainability and transferability

4.1 Relevance to topics in the remit of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Since the *Civic Innovation Platform* is a project of the Policy Lab Digital, Work & Society in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the projects need to have a clear connection to the ministry's remit. Prizes can be awarded for ideas to improve

- the world of work
- work culture
- work organisation
- health and safety at work
- making AI use transparent and comprehensible
- the social partnership and worker participation
- the labour market
- new forms of employment (e.g. in the platform economy)
- securing the supply of skilled labour
- further training
- inclusion
- rehabilitation
- equal opportunities
- participation

4.2 Interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral project partnership

Innovative solutions emerge from the exchange between actors from different disciplines and/or sectors who can share different capabilities and perspectives. The *Civic Innovation Platform* therefore counts on different sectors working together - open-minded, as true partners and focused on solutions that can be put into practice.

Only submissions from project teams that fulfil the basic prerequisite of being an interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral project partnership can therefore be considered. Submissions by individual actors will not be accepted. Also, the combination of private

individuals with a start-up or an SME is not eligible. In such cases, another project partner from a different sector is necessary.

Sectors in the sense of this call for submissions are:

- educational institutions and research institutions
- SMEs and start-ups
- municipalities
- public institutions
- private individuals
- Clubs, associations and non-profit companies (e.g. a gGmbH, gUG or gAG)

Project teams made up of several partners from one sector as defined above must clearly demonstrate the interdisciplinarity or their complementary perspectives and their capabilities of the project partners in their submission.

Making it a requirement that project teams are interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral in nature serves to ensure that the open innovation principle of the *Civic Innovation Platform* is taken into account: working together, multiple project partners from societal, social, research, technological and/or economic expertise will develop a promising, innovative idea for the common good based on artificial intelligence.

4.3 Evaluation process

As the organiser of the competition, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will first review the formal eligibility of the submissions. Submissions that do not have a clearly relevant connection to the remit of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or cannot demonstrate an interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral project partnership do not fulfil the necessary conditions for participation in the contest and will not be considered further.

After making sure the formal requirements have been fulfilled, a jury consisting of representatives from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, selected experts from among the CIP cooperation partners and potentially other experts, will decide which projects will be invited to give an elevator pitch on the basis of the evaluation criteria.

If the submissions fulfil the two formal criteria "connection to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs remit" and "interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral project partnership", these two criteria will also be included in the **qualitative evaluation**.

The format of the pitch for the idea (virtual or in-person event in Berlin) will depend on the framework conditions and possibilities in the situation. On the basis of the prize jury's

assessments of the project ideas, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will select ideas to be awarded prizes.

Submissions that the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs considers to be worthy of an award in principle, but which were not considered for a pitch because of their weaknesses, may be returned to the submitting party with instructions for improvement. A revised outline of the idea can be submitted in the next round of competition. There is no entitlement to an award. After the selection is over, all participants will be informed by e-mail about the result of their application.

5 Award ceremony and publication of the winning ideas

The winners will be invited to an award ceremony and an initial networking workshop. Participation in both events is an obligatory requirement for the payment of the first tranche of the prize money (cf. point 2.1). The winners of the individual rounds of the competition and a short description of the winning entries will be made public in the framework of awarding prizes. By submitting their project outlines to the competition, the authors of the ideas agree to the publication on the website. The presentation of the award-winning ideas and their further development as plans as well as a portrait of the winning teams will take place in coordination with the award-winners on the *Civic Innovation Platform* - consent to this is granted with submission of the outline of the idea.

The Civic Innovation Platform is a project of the Policy Lab Digital, Work & Society of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

