

OPEN SUBMISSION FOR PROJECTS ON PRIORITY TOPICS

1. Background and objectives

As a result of the digital shift, traditional media organizations are facing many critical challenges that threaten their existence and force them to undergo a profound transformation: media convergence, growing competition from major platforms, evolving audience consumption habits, public distrust of the media and other institutions, accelerating technological advances, etc. The breadth of these challenges calls for interdisciplinary approaches that bring together the media sector, the humanities and social sciences, and the engineering sciences in the search for solutions based on collaboration between professional and academic stakeholders.

By supporting research projects, IMI aims to defend the principle of applied research, enabling media partners to continue their digital transition and search for sustainable solutions, and scientific institutions to conduct novel research in their fields.

2 Priority topics

IMI welcomes all research proposals that fall within the context of the media described above (1) and that meet the requirements outlined briefly below (3) and in more detail in the "Funding Request" document available on our website¹. While not exclusive, the following are priority topics:

- Ensure the quality and diversity of information.
- Evolve traditional business models to digital offerings.
- Ensure access to media for all audiences and adapt to their new consumption habits (user experience, interface design, accessibility, etc.).
- Harness the potential of artificial intelligence while protecting user privacy (automated writing, automated translation, content recommendation, personalization, automated video creation, social network analysis, content delivery optimization, information verification, etc.).
- Build trust and foster dialogue with the public.
- Explore formats and narratives that encourage audience engagement.
- Gain a better understanding of user behavior and needs.
- Ensure the independence of the media, particularly in the context of political and economic pressures and the role of major platforms in the distribution of and access to information.

3 General requirements

The following is a general overview of the requirements for applying to the IMI Research Grant. For further guidance, please refer to the full document available on our website.

¹ <https://bit.ly/imi-funding>



3.1 Eligibility

Open primarily to academic institutions and media organizations affiliated with IMI, but third parties may also apply, in which case they are encouraged to seek collaboration with IMI members.

3.2 Project length

From a few months to up to 24 months.

3.3 Grant amount

Generally up to CHF 120,000 per year (excluding overhead costs).

3.4 Media partnership

A media organization must be involved in each project, either by contributing or at least by endorsing it.

In all cases, the IMI Director (see 6) is available to help establish such collaborations or partnerships.

4 Timetable

For our priority topics, grant applications can be submitted at any time, preferably after an initial contact with IMI (see 6) for a first discussion. The evaluation process usually takes up to 3 months, after which IMI will contact each project coordinator by email to inform them of the decision made by the IMI Board. In principle, projects must start no later than 3 months after the decision by IMI to award a grant.

5 About IMI

IMI is a multidisciplinary membership organization, housed at EPFL, that brings together leading scientific institutions and public and private media companies. Our mission is to act as an interface between academia and the media and mediatech sector. In this way, we help media companies to innovate and adapt as they go digital. At the same time, we advance academic research in all related fields, both through information technology and in relation to human and social sciences. Ultimately, we work to ensure the diversity and quality of media in our democratic society.

To this end, our founding members which are EPFL, Ringier AG, SRG SSR and Triangle Azur—a cooperation network between the Universities of Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel—as well as our affiliate members such as HES-SO Valais-Wallis, maintain an innovation support fund with an annual budget of approximately CHF 650,000 to invest in research and innovation projects. Finally, we remain open to all private and public organizations in Switzerland and abroad that wish to join and are active in the relevant fields.



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