Rules for the Responsible use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in proposal preparation and evaluation for calls for Access to National Facilities

1. Premise

These rules establish expectations for the **responsible use of generative Artificial Intelligence technologies** ("AI tools" from now on), including large language models (LLMs), AI writing assistants and other AI-based tools, in the preparation, submission, review, and evaluation of applications requesting access ("applications") to the National Facilities (NFs) through the calls for Access.

These rules seek to balance the potential benefits of AI in improving productivity and communication with the fundamental principles of accountability, originality, confidentiality, research integrity, fairness and independent scientific judgment.

The Standing Independent Evaluation Committee (SIEC) and the User Access Office (UAO) of the NFs oversee the application and evaluation process for calls for Access, ensuring that it is conducted in a transparent, fair, and rigorous manner.

2. Guiding Principles

These rules are based on five overarching principles:

I. **Human accountability** - scientific ideas, originality, judgments, and awarding decisions remain the responsibility of qualified individuals.

II. **Confidentiality** - ensuring sensitive information is only available – accessed, shared, or disclosed – to authorized parties.

III. **Integrity** - AI-assisted work must be accurate, transparent, and subject to human verification.

IV. **Fairness** - the use of AI tools must not compromise unbiased evaluation of applications by qualified individuals.

V. **Security** - ensuring that data, systems, and information are protected from unauthorized access, misuse, alteration, leakage, loss, or cyber threats, in compliance with legal, security and regulatory requirements (e.g., GDPR, cybersecurity, etc).

3. Scope

These rules apply to Applicants, i.e. Principal Investigators (PI) applying to the calls for Access to the NFs, as well as to all individuals involved in the preparation of applications, including research staff, collaborators, consultants, and administrative personnel.

It also applies to external Reviewers, members of the SIEC, and any other individuals involved in the evaluation and decision-making processes related to the aforementioned calls and applications.

4. Use of AI tools in proposal preparation

4.1 Guidelines for applicants

The use of generative AI tools as an assistive aid in the preparation of applications is permitted, provided that the Applicant and the research team retain full responsibility for the content, originality, accuracy, and scientific integrity of the application.

Applicants remain fully and solely accountable for all information submitted, regardless of whether generative AI tools have been used in drafting, editing, translating, summarizing, or otherwise supporting the preparation of the proposal.

The use of generative AI tools does not diminish the responsibility of the Applicant and the research team to ensure that the application is free from plagiarism, and compliant with all applicable requirements governing the calls for Access.

Any use of generative AI tools in the preparation of an access request proposal, to any extent, must be disclosed in the application. Such disclosure should specify the AI tool(s) used and the nature of their contribution (see "Appropriate uses" section below) to the proposal preparation process.

Uses of AI tools, provided that they do not alter, generate, or materially influence the scientific content, ideas, methodology, or conclusions of the proposal, are:

Appropriate uses:

- Improving grammar, readability, and clarity;
- Editing, polishing and formatting text;
- Creation of infographics;
- Summarizing literature, non-confidential or publicly available information;
- Drafting non-scientific, administrative, sections of the application;
- Other minor support tasks.

Uses for which the human judgement of the applicant must remain paramount:

- Assisting with brainstorming ideas or alternative approaches;
- Generating organizational outlines or timelines (e.g., Gannt charts);
- Supporting software development or routine coding tasks where appropriate;
- Assisting with topics search.

Generative AI tools must not be used to:

- Generate an entire application or substantive scientific sections without meaningful human intellectual contribution;
- Fabricate, falsify, or manipulate scientific information, data, images, references, or quantifications;
- Plagiarize or misappropriate the intellectual property of others;
- Replace the Applicant's own scientific reasoning, interpretation, or conclusions.

4.2 Recommendations to applicants

Applicants remain fully and solely accountable for the proposal content and the following principles apply:

- Applicants remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, completeness, and scientific validity of all submitted materials.
- AI-generated content must be carefully reviewed and verified by the Applicant before submission, to avoid plagiarism and research integrity violations, such as fabricated references, inaccurate statements, violation of IP, unsupported claims, misinterpreted data or hallucinated content.
- Applicants entering any confidential, proprietary, unpublished, or personally identifiable information into publicly accessible or institutional (internal) AI systems remain fully responsible for how the data are used.
- Generative AI tools must not be listed as authors, co-investigators, or contributors responsible for scientific content, for which applicants remain fully and solely responsible for the originality and accuracy.

5. Use of AI tools in proposals review and evaluation

5.1 Guidelines for reviewers/evaluators

Scientific evaluation and awarding recommendations must represent the independent assessment of qualified reviewers.

Additionally, based on the principles of Confidentiality and data protection (see Section 5.2), the integrity and confidentiality of the review and evaluation process require substantially stricter standards.

Reviewers, panel members, external experts, and any individual participating in the evaluation of applications shall not upload, share, or input any portion of an application, review materials, their own and/or fellow reviewer's comments, deliberative discussions, or other confidential evaluation documents into publicly available or internal/local AI systems, with the exception of appropriate use listed below.

Appropriate use of AI tools:

Reviewers are recommended to **use generative AI tools** (either external or internal to their Institute/Organization) **only as limited assistance**, while ensuring that their own expertise, critical assessment, and independent judgment remain the primary basis for the evaluation.

Appropriate uses are:

- Topic search;
- Summarizing publicly available information;
- Perform editorial tasks on texts, that do not involve disclosure of confidential application or review content and provided they do not perform evaluative or decision-making functions (see prohibited uses below)
    - **Example** – improving the language or formatting of their own review can be done after all confidential and personal identifiable information has been removed.

Reviewers are **prohibited** from using generative AI tools to:

- Upload applications (in whole or in part), their fellow reviewers' comments, panel documents, or any confidential review materials into publicly available generative AI platforms;
- Generate, draft and modify their reviews and evaluations contents;
- Summarize, evaluate, score, rank, or recommend awarding decisions for applications;
- Analyze scientific merit;
- Formulate awarding recommendations;
- Rely on AI-generated analyses in place of their own independent expert assessment or substitute AI-generated evaluations (evaluative or decision-making functions) for independent expert judgment.

5.2 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Applications contain confidential scientific ideas, unpublished data, intellectual property, proprietary methods, and personal information.

Accordingly:

- Any materials, documents and information part of an application shall not be entered into either external or internal AI services, except for permitted uses (see above).
- All Reviewers must comply with rules and regulations included in all applicable agreements (i.e., Assignment Letter) and confidentiality declarations.
- Review materials remain confidential before, during, and after the review process, aligned to peer review principles.
- Institutionally (internal) approved AI tools that operate within secure environments and have undergone appropriate privacy, security, and legal review **may be authorized for limited support and administrative or editorial tasks** that do not involve disclosure of confidential application content both to the AI tool or to a third party, provided they do not perform evaluative or decision-making functions (see Section 5.1).

5.3 Suspected Misuse of generative AI by Applicants

Reviewers are not expected to determine whether, or to what extent, an applicant has used generative AI in preparing an application. Their responsibility is to evaluate the scientific merit, originality, and feasibility of the access request based on the information provided in the application.

If, during the review process, a reviewer identifies **clear evidence** of potential **research integrity concerns** (such as fabricated or unverifiable references, manipulated images, internally inconsistent information, or other evidence suggesting fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or material misrepresentation), the Reviewer should not attempt to investigate the matter independently.

Instead, the Reviewer should confidentially report their concerns to the designated UAO (national.facilities@fht.org), providing a clear description of the observed issues and the basis for their concern. Any assessment of potential misconduct (reference: https://ori.hhs.gov/) or violations will be conducted through the UAO and the SIEC, ensuring fairness, confidentiality, and a due process (see also section 7).

Any concerns regarding an application should be based on objective indicators that affect its integrity, accuracy, originality, or reliability, rather than on speculation about the methods used in its preparation. In particular, **the suspected or presumed use of generative AI by an Applicant**, in the absence of objective evidence of policy violations, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, or scientific inaccuracies, **shall not be**

considered evidence of misconduct. The mere suspicion that an application was prepared, in whole or in part, using generative AI tools must not influence the scientific assessment of the proposal.

Reviewers are expected to conduct their evaluations impartially and to take reasonable steps to minimize potential biases related to the perceived use of generative AI. If a Reviewer believes that concerns regarding the potential use of generative AI may **impair their ability to provide an objective and impartial assessment**, the Reviewer shall promptly disclose the matter to the UAO (national.facilities@fht.org), which may reassign the application to another Reviewer as appropriate.

6. Transparency and Accountability

Applicants and Reviewers remain personally accountable for all work submitted under their names.

Any material use of generative AI, including the nature and extent of such use, must be mandatorily disclosed during proposal preparation or evaluation, respectively.

The SIEC and UAO may also request disclosure of the use of generative AI as part of research integrity reviews or other verification activities.

7. Policy Compliance

Violations of this policy may constitute breaches of research integrity, confidentiality obligations, or institutional policy.

Violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential application materials through AI systems;
- Inappropriate use of generative AI during peer review and awarding recommendations;
- Misrepresentation of AI-generated work as original scholarly work;
- Fabrication or falsification of proposal content using AI tools.

Confirmed violations may result in corrective actions and/or measures at the discretion of the SIEC and UAO, which are responsible for the management and proper execution of all process related to the calls for Access to the NFs.

8. Policy Review

Given the rapid evolution of generative AI technologies, this policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as needed to remain consistent with applicable laws, institutional policies, and calls for Access to the NFs requirements.