

MMM Investigator Seed-Grant 2026

MMM Investigator Seed-Grants aim to support new high-impact collaborations between MMM-members that are designed as a basis for **new joint third-party funded research proposals** (e.g., DFG) in the thematic focus of MMM. The joint work should further strengthen the ties and shared research foci between working groups of the Minds, Media and Machines High Profile Area.

MMM Investigator Seed-Grants are intended for **teams led by at least two MMM members** who will conduct a new research project in preparation of an ambitious joint line of research. Applications from MMM teams of different disciplines are especially encouraged but not a requirement. The intended outputs are **key publications** that, together with previous work from both teams, are **sufficient for joint applications for 3rd party funding**. Applicants must make a clear commitment to prepare one or more proposals for **third-party funding**. Proposals should specify, how the expected publications and other research outputs will fill crucial gaps towards a new third-party funded research proposal (e.g., DFG) – or how the work to be conducted as part of the Investigator Seed-Grant will include a new collaborator from another MMM-AG in larger proposal efforts (e.g., Horizon Europe).

In 2026, we aim to support **1 new Investigator Seed-Grant** with a maximum amount of **40.000 EUR**. For smaller or earlier stages of a new collaboration, potential applicants are encouraged to first consider our call for MMM Impulse Seed-Grants, which could also be used for establishing the start of a new collaboration or line of work. Interested MMM-Members are encouraged to contact us either via email at kuester@uni-bremen.de or by phone (0421 218-64266) to discuss the possibilities.

Grant Criteria:

The MMM Investigator Seed-Grant is aimed at initiatives that are designed to conduct collaborative research on Minds, Media, and Machines. The overarching goal of collaborative proposals in this funding line is to “seed” promising collaborative third-party funded MMM-research in artificial intelligence, robotics, technical cognitive systems, machine learning, data science, human computer interaction, social media, and mediatisation. Proposals should therefore be **aligned with the mission of MMM** and address key issues related to MMM-technologies, such as the benefit and welfare of the society, taking on board aspects such as usability, privacy, security, sustainability, and lawfulness, and supporting aspects of human life ranging from the education of children to the support of the elderly.

Investigator Seed-Grant applications should specifically describe the project’s milestones towards obtaining joint third party-funding. A strong focus should be placed on the expected impact of the proposed work, and how project is going to contribute added value to MMM that would not be created otherwise. Additionally, applications should outline the project’s wider contribution to the MMM ecosystem, highlighting the points that may help to distinguish it from other proposals.

Investigator Seed-Grant proposals should provide a clear research plan with **specific targeted publication outputs**, demonstrate **scientific excellence**, and describe how the current individual **expertise of the applicants** will be linked through the expected publications and other research outputs to prepare a strong **proposal for third-party funding** to be submitted **within 12 months** of the approval of the seed funding. The Investigator Seed-Grant proposal should detail **targeted third-party funding instruments** and include a tentative timeline until submission of at least one joint proposal. The **involvement of new AGs**, who have not previously benefited from MMM Seed-Grant funding, will be positively considered. Already previously funded AGs should include a brief separate statement on their contributions and any updates to **outcomes of from previous MMM funding** that has not already been reported. Lastly, attention should be paid to the **adequacy of the requested funding**, considering the competitive nature and limited overall budget for these proposals.

Examples of possible cost positions in this funding period include, but are not limited to:

- Studies that aim to examine a new method or explore new research questions at a thematic intersection with another MMM-AG (supporting collaboration and integration in MMM);
- Costs for temporary (named and available) scientific staff¹;
- Funding for data collection / annotation student hours to pursue a new research angle within the scope of our motto to advance *Intelligence in Action* (see <https://minds-media-machines.de/>);
- Funding of materials or small equipment required for the seed work and third-party funding proposal²;
- Conference attendance to present joint project results.

Financial support for other types of costs is possible if they directly support the seed project. Collaboration with MMM-external partners is possible. However, these partners will not be eligible to receive funding via the MMM Investigator Seed Grant.

Funding Conditions:

The funding decisions for all applications will be made by the members of the MMM Executive Board. Based on the decisions, applicants will receive a decision letter addressing the above-stated grant criteria. For administrative and legal reasons, seed grants cannot have their own “Kostenstelle” in the SAP but remain tied to the overall MMM-funding. All expenses must therefore be communicated in advance to the MMM Office.

Funding via the MMM Investigator Seed Grants is available for **activities that can be concluded within twelve months**. Projects should start, for all involved AGs, **within 6 months of the date of approval**. They should be completed within 12 months of the date of approval. Cost-free extensions are possible. However, project funding will end by **December 31st, 2026**. It will **not** be possible to carry over any funds into 2027 because the overarching APF MMM-funding allows for no carry-over funding.

MMM Seed grants are subject to the same basic rules as any other funding provided via the city state of Bremen³ (“Landesmittel”). Only **PI- and Associate Investigator members of MMM are eligible** to apply for MMM Investigator Seed-Grants. Other members of MMM-AGs (e.g., **PostDocs**) may be involved as collaborators if approved by the PI- and Associate Investigator members of their MMM-AG. Funding for a new project cannot be used to top-up a granted seed money proposal from former calls / rounds. However, AGs from the previous rounds of the MMM Seed-Grant series may apply for new projects involving new collaborations in MMM.

Reporting Requirements:

Applications are required to provide a publication plan and an outline for the targeted third-party proposal preparation and submission. A **final report** must be submitted **no later than 4 weeks after the end of the project** (ca. 3-5 pages).

Applicants further agree to support seed-grant related MMM-activities and updates. These include:

- A brief report at MMM-meetings (general assembly, retreat)
- A notice on seed-grant based manuscript submissions and grant submissions (mmm@uni-bremen.de)
- Manuscript submissions should include a brief **funding note** (equivalent to DFG/BMBF).
- Conference presentations, supported workshops, lecture series, or similar events should prominently include the MMM-logo as part of the presentation and / or advertising.

¹ MMM cannot take any legal and / or administrative responsibility for filling these positions. Any plans for hiring and working with temporary staff must furthermore be feasible within the limited duration of the proposed project, with no possibility to carry over any funding into 2027. Where possible, proposals should already name any key personnel and ensure their availability before submission.

² Equipment costs should not exceed **5000€** per AG

³ Grants are subject to the general rules of the University of Bremen for SAP-purchases and “Landesmittel” (e.g., no “Grundausrüstung”, catering costs).

Application Guidelines:

Applications for the MMM Impulse Seed Grants can be submitted via [E-MAIL](mailto:mmm@uni-bremen.de) to mmm@uni-bremen.de until the **deadline on May 1st, 2026** (any time on earth). Please use the **Application Form** below. The application should not exceed **four pages**, using a font size of 10 pts, plus up to 1 page for references.

Title	[Title]
List of MMM PI applicants	[name], [MMM-AG]; [name], [MMM-AG]
Collaborator(s)	[name], [MMM-AG]; [name], [MMM-AG]
Estimated start - end	[DD.MM.YYYY] - [DD.MM.YYYY]

1. Summary (max. 250 words)

[Pitch of the project idea, expected results, and how it relates to the mission of MMM.]

2. Project Proposal

[Text.]

2.1. Background and research questions

[This section should provide a brief statement about the background and State of Art, followed by the main research question(s) to be addressed. Relevant own previous work should be included where suitable but is not as critical as in other types of proposals due to the aim of facilitating new initiatives for collaborations in MMM.]

2.2. Relevance, Objectives, and Expected Results

[This section should detail the expected outcomes of the proposed project. Explain how your work is relevant to the mission of MMM, which MMM cross-cutting issues are addressed, and what your objectives are with respect to leveraging the project results for future work / proposals.]

2.3. Methods

[Detail the methods of the proposed work, considering the methodological benefits of conducting this work collaboratively in MMM.]

2.4. Workplan and Timeline

*[The timeline should include target dates and suggested outlets of planned publications as well as a preliminary **timeline for the planned third-party proposal preparation**. Depending on the complexity of the proposed work, consider including a Gantt chart.]*

2.5. Resource Plan

[Brief summary of the individual items.]

Nr.	Requested item	Cost [EUR]
1		
2		
Total amount		

* if a currency conversion is required, please use <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/> and indicate the date of the conversion.

References

[References should adhere to the APA reference style (7th Edition).]

3. Statement [may use digital signatures]

The applicant(s) has (have) no other financial resources available or requested for the activity.

Date, Signature

Date, Signature

Date, Signature