

Guideline for Contractual Partners on the Use of Generative Models of Artificial Intelligence

Version: 30 June 2025

1. Introduction

The Austrian Institute of Economic Research (hereinafter referred to as "WIFO") is committed to the responsible, transparent and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) in all its areas of activity. This guideline summarises the current state of the rules governing the use of AI for organisations and individuals acting on behalf of WIFO as contractual partners, such as (sub-)contractors or consortium partners (hereinafter referred to as "contractual partner").

The proper use of artificial intelligence (AI) offers great opportunities to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and creativity and is therefore expressly welcomed by WIFO. Rapid change requires a high degree of attention and flexibility, as well as a willingness to learn continuously. The focus is on **generative** artificial intelligence **models**, which are distinguished by their ability to learn existing patterns, structures or characteristics from existing data and **to generate new, original content** from them¹.

Insofar as the use of AI tools is permitted in the provision of the contractually agreed services, **the contractual partner may use AI tools exclusively in accordance with this AI Guideline and all applicable requirements**. Failure to comply with these provisions constitutes a material breach, may therefore lead to legal consequences, and must be reported to WIFO immediately and in a verifiable manner, stating the relevant reasons.

The contractual partner shall ensure that all persons working on behalf of WIFO within the scope of the contract have been demonstrably made aware of this guideline.

2. Scientific Integrity

In addition to the requirements regarding technical infrastructure and personal skills in the use of AI, scientific integrity is an essential prerequisite for ensuring research quality, trust, and a positive societal impact. As a general principle, when using AI – as with all other research activities – the applicable national, European and international legal provisions must be observed. Likewise, the same requirements and rules apply as those set out, e.g. in the European Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity (All European Academies, 2023) or in the WIFO Guideline on

¹ The definition of the term "generative AI models" used here is based on a query to ChatGPT and further research (Google, Wikipedia) carried out on 14 March 2025.

Scientific Integrity². Any form of **misconduct**, such as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism of data and results, must be ruled out, as must any infringement of **personal rights, copyright** and **data protection**³. Scientific integrity also imposes the following specific requirements on research:

- **transparency** regarding clients, financial contributions, and conflicts of interest;
- proper **citation** of all relevant **sources** for ideas, texts, data, etc.;
- thorough **review** of the results, taking into account critical assumptions, robustness, and the limitations of the methods used;
- traceability of results by retaining all necessary documentation (such as data, methods, questionnaires, and sampling plans) for at least 10 years.

3. Specific new challenges

The wide range of new opportunities, together with the unprecedented and rapidly growing capabilities **of generative AI models**, present additional challenges (European Commission, 2023, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, 2023). The following principles therefore complement and clarify the WIFO guideline on scientific integrity with regard to the use of generative AI.

Personal responsibility

The legally compliant and rule-abiding use of generative AI is the personal responsibility of the individual who actively uses it or reuses its outputs. This also includes a willingness to engage in continuous professional development when working with generative AI models, e.g. through training courses or participation in user forums. In accordance with this **personal responsibility**, every person who uses generative AI models is accountable for the integrity of the content used by

- carefully reviewing AI-generated results
- ensuring that no AI-generated fabrications, falsifications, or plagiarised content are used or disseminated
- maintaining a critical approach when interpreting the results
- being aware of the limitations of the tools (e.g. with regard to possible hallucinations, biases and inaccuracies, as well as a lack of reproducibility).

In this context, organisations such as the Leibniz Gesellschaft (2024, 3), e.g. emphasise that AI systems are "merely supportive tools". Their "results have no scientific validity in their own right and are no substitute for authentic processes of knowledge acquisition and decision-making". Therefore, any new AI-generated content must always be carefully reviewed for accuracy by the responsible individual. If justified doubts about its accuracy remain, the use of AI tools

² See the appendix to the (sub-)contract for services and also at <https://www.wifo.ac.at/en/institute/evidence-based-transparency-and-independence/>.

³ See, e.g. Birnbauer (2025).

should either be limited to an initial idea generation phase (brainstorming) followed by comprehensive and independent research, or avoided altogether.

This personal responsibility establishes the principle of "**Human in the Loop**" for all applications of generative AI models, meaning the primacy of human control and responsibility – whereby a natural person acting on their own responsibility must be involved **at the beginning and end of every application**⁴. It follows from this, e.g. that there must be no automated publication of AI-generated content without prior review by a person responsible for that content.

Transparency

The **authorship** of content generated with the help of generative AI models lies with the human users of the AI⁵. However, the use of generative AI in the research process requires, when publishing results, a specific indication of which tools were used, when they were used, and for what purpose. The rules for citing AI-generated content are still under development internationally and are updated regularly. They are laid down by various research societies or academic publishers, sometimes with significant variations. When publishing, the rules of clients, publishers or editors of research results, as well as those of the AI tools used, must be observed in each case.

The following rules and guidelines provide general **guidance**:

- Unless the data is publicly available, it is treated as **personal communication** and cited either in footnotes⁶ or directly in the text (ChatGPT, 6 April 2025). It is not necessary to include it in the reference list.
- The use of AI that influences the overall result but does not produce directly attributable specific content, e.g. for general idea generation ("brainstorming"), is disclosed in the **general notes**⁷.
- The use of **purely technical tools** that do not generate original content may be exempt from this requirement⁸. It is the responsibility of the authors to assess which AI-assisted content is of an original nature to a significant extent. In cases of doubt, particularly where AI is used extensively, this should, however, be stated in the general notes.
- Insofar as it is necessary for the subsequent **traceability** of the research results, the AI's inputs (prompts) and outputs must also be stored for at least 10 years. Excluded from this are data and documents which, due to specific regulations (e.g. data protection, copyright, terms of use), must be deleted after processing. This means that, in cases of doubt, the

⁴ See, e.g. Austria Presse Agentur (2023) or Österreichischer Rundfunk (2025).

⁵ For instance, copyright protection also requires that "these are (i) original and (ii) intellectual creations of a human being" (Birnbauer, 2025, Reg. 6, Chap. 1.2, 1).

⁶ For example: "This statement is based on a question posed to/interaction with *ChatGPT* on 6 April 2025, <https://chat.openai.com>."

⁷ For example, in the "Acknowledgements" or in a section entitled "Further Sources" following the bibliography.

⁸ In WIFO publications, such exceptions may apply, e.g. to AI-assisted proofreading and translation services, the coding of programme scripts or the use of software for transcribing interviews, provided that this does not contravene the terms of use of the AI tools.

protection of data, copyright, etc. takes precedence. Any gaps resulting from deletion must be documented in a traceable manner.

Personal rights and data protection

Sensitive or protected data must under no circumstances be uploaded online to an AI system, unless a technically competent body on the part of the contractual partner has checked and confirmed that the tool used does not store or pass on this data and, for example, does not reuse it for training future language models. In addition, any terms of use (including copyright provisions) relating to the data sets used must be observed. Examples of sensitive or protected data include

- trade secrets (e.g. unpublished strategy documents, drafts of forecasts, statements or press releases),
- personnel data (e.g. job application documents, minutes of staff appraisals),
- personal information from third parties in emails (e.g. signatures, opinions, personal statements) and
- unpublished research, particularly if it originates from third parties.

References

- All European Academies – ALLEA (2023). *Europäischer Verhaltenskodex für wissenschaftliche Integrität – überarbeitete Fassung 2023*. <https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CoC2023-German.pdf>.
- Austria Presse Agentur – APA (2023). *Leitlinie zum Umgang mit künstlicher Intelligenz*.
- Birnbauer D. (Hrsg.; 2025). *Künstliche Intelligenz in der Praxis*, WEKA.
- Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG (2023). *Stellungnahme des Präsidiums der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) zum Einfluss generativer Modelle für die Text- und Bilderstellung auf die Wissenschaften und das Förderhandeln* der DFG. <https://www.dfg.de/resource/blob/289674/ff57cf46c5ca109cb18533b21fba49bd/230921-stellungnahme-praesidium-ki-ai-data.pdf>.
- Europäische Kommission (2023). *Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research. ERA Forum Stakeholders' document*. European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/2b6cf7e5-36ac-41cb-aab5-0d32050143dc_en.
- Europäische Union (2024). *Verordnung (EU) 2024/1689 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 13. Juni 2024 zur Festlegung harmonisierter Vorschriften für künstliche Intelligenz und zur Änderung der Verordnungen (EG) Nr. 300/2008, (EU) Nr. 167/2013, (EU) Nr. 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 und (EU) 2019/2144 sowie der Richtlinien 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 und (EU) 2020/1828 (Verordnung über künstliche Intelligenz)*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202401689.
- Leibniz Gesellschaft (2024). *Empfehlung zur Sicherung der guten wissenschaftlichen Praxis beim Umgang mit Künstlicher Intelligenz*. Beschlossen durch das Präsidium der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft am 29. November 2024. https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/fileadmin/documents/3085-2906/Leibniz_Empfehlung_zur_KI_Beschluss_Praesidium_2024_11_29_.pdf.
- Österreichischer Rundfunk – ORF (2025). *KI-Guidelines: glaubwürdig, verlässlich und innovativ*.

Further sources

DeepLWrite was used for linguistic proofreading and ChatGPT for specific research tasks (e.g. definitions of terms, citation rules) whilst compiling this guide. The authors have reviewed and edited the content used and accept full responsibility for it.