

Q&A HTI Braunschweig

1. Application & Submission

- **What's the difference between applying to the HTI and applying for funding at NBank?**
First, you apply to the HTI (Hightech Incubator). If your application is rated positively by the jury and reviewers, you'll then be allowed to submit a funding application to NBank. So, applying to the HTI comes first — and only after a successful review can you apply for the actual funding.
- **Why can the application form indicate that the startup will be founded in the future?**
This is because the application phase at the HTI takes place before the official application period at NBank (expected from the end of September). At the time of submission to NBank, the startup must already be founded and must not be older than five years (based on the date in the commercial register). Therefore, future incorporations can be indicated in the application form, as long as the official legal founding occurs before submission to NBank.
- **What happens if I selected the wrong program (STEP vs. RIS3) in the application form?**
That's not a problem. The HTI team will review the selection and get in touch with you if a reclassification is needed. The final decision lies with NBank.
- **Can I apply more than once?**
Yes, you can apply to multiple HTIs or in multiple rounds. However, only one funding is possible — not multiple — whether from the same HTI or different ones.
- **Are all HTI application processes the same?**
No. Deadlines, requirements, and documents vary from one HTI to another. Please check directly with the relevant HTI for specific details.

2. Funding Criteria & Requirements

- **Are technologies eligible if they only fall under STEP but not RIS3?**
No. A project must fall under both STEP and RIS3 and must have reached at least TRL 4. If you are unsure whether your topic is RIS3-compliant, you can discuss this with your HTI.
- **What does TRL 4 mean and how is it proven?**
TRL 4 means the technology has been validated in a lab scenario. Proof is provided in the application to NBank.
- **Is there an upper limit for TRL or company size?**
No. There is no fixed upper limit as long as the company meets the criteria of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER).
- **Is the five-year age limit affected by the COVID-19 period?**
No. The relevant date is the entry in the commercial register at the time of submission to NBank (expected at the end of September).
- **Can dual-use cases (civil/military) be funded?**
This is still under review.
- **Is the TRL also evaluated for RIS3?**
No, TRL is only assessed in the STEP context.
- **What happens if I am not founded and cannot prove my TRL by the end of September?**
In that case, you cannot apply in the current round. However, you are welcome to apply for the next batch, which is expected to start in January 2026.
- **Can teams that already received funding in HTI 1.0 apply again?**
Startups from HTI 1.0 can apply for the current HTI.

3. Funding, Budget, and Payouts

- **How does NBank funding work?**
The funding is based on the reimbursement principle: the startup pays expenses upfront, and then costs are reimbursed. For RIS3, milestone-based payments may be possible — details are still being clarified.
- **How long does it take for NBank to disburse the funds?**
This depends on the individual case, deadlines, and NBank's processing time.
- **How do I know how much of my budget I have left?**
You can track this through your funding notifications and project overviews.
- **Do I need to prove the 10% co-financing now?**
No. In the HTI application, it is sufficient to plausibly demonstrate that the startup can provide the co-financing. Proof is only required at the time of application submission to NBank.

This document might be updated due to new information or legal restrictions.

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- **Does HTI funding exclude other funding opportunities?**

EFRE funding is very likely not combinable. Other EU programs might be possible depending on the structure in individual cases. Please consult the HTI team directly on this.

4. Documents & Submission

- **What should the business plan look like?**

The business plan should be around ten pages long and must not consist solely of Excel files — a written document with content such as goals, market analysis, milestones, and scaling potential is recommended. The materials should be understandable, persuasive, and easy to follow for the reviewers and jury.

- **Can materials be submitted in German?**

Yes. Both German and English are permitted.

- **Can I use existing pitch decks or videos?**

Yes, absolutely. You can use existing materials if they fit the application and are compelling in terms of content and quality. Ensure that the presentation is clear, structured, and informative for the jury and reviewers.

- **What is the video from Phase 2 used for?**

The video is shared internally with the reviewers and jury only. It will not be published on social media. If the HTI wants to use the video publicly, your consent will be requested beforehand.

5. Topic Suggestions & Individual Interests

How can I suggest topics that interest me (e.g., franchising)?

There is a “Support Expectation” field in the application form where you can suggest your own topics.

6. Infrastructure & Resources

Do I get access only to PTB's infrastructure or also to other partners?

The infrastructure use applies to all HTI partners — not just PTB, but also, for example, the Technical University.