

Feedback of HIFIS SAB 2022

The members of the [HIFIS Scientific Advisory Board \(SAB\)](#) met for the third time since the start of the HIFIS platform, in a [video conference meeting on June 8, 2022](#).

The SAB acknowledges the results HIFIS achieved during its first three years and is strongly committed to support its continuation. During its most recent meeting, the SAB formulated the following high level ambitions to be considered for the upcoming phases of HIFIS:

- **Awareness:** Consider branding of HIFIS services to make researchers aware what they are using, even beyond Helmholtz. The SAB sees this an important pre-condition not only to gain broader support but also to receive dedicated and constructive feedback.
- **Coverage:** Strengthen efforts to make HIFIS services commonly accepted and practically used by all Helmholtz centres. A fragmentation of Helmholtz centres into those with and without use of HIFIS services should be avoided by (almost) all means.
- **Interaction and Support:** Increase where possible interaction with end users. The aim should be that end users consider HIFIS as “essential services and optimal support to our research”. The SAB expects this understanding will trigger an intrinsic motivation to improve and further develop HIFIS together.
- **Relevance:** Ensure HIFIS will become a “natural” element in strategic discussions and decision-making within Helmholtz. The three previous comments may be seen as necessary preparation towards this.

In addition, the SAB provided more specific comments on the following topics:

- **KPIs:** It is recognized by the SAB that the KPIs have been helpful to evaluate the introduction and ramp-up phase of HIFIS services. However, the SAB notes that most of the KPIs do not support appropriate measurement of the ambitions above and therefore suggests to reconsider part of it. High level question such as “To what extent do the HIFIS services contribute to the success of the Helmholtz research?” might serve as guiding principles towards such KPIs.
- **International collaboration:** The SAB appreciates the efforts by HIFIS to contribute also to international collaborations and suggest an improved strategic approach towards such initiatives, in order to support more federations at an international if not global scale. For example, work in the area of Authentication and Authentication Infrastructures (AAI) could be extended, where HIFIS uses the well-known AARC blueprint and provides relevant contributions to the corresponding standardisation group AEGIS already. Other results and services of HIFIS – like the federation of group folders – could be promoted and offered to more international collaborations.
- **Cyber security:** This might become a relevant area for HIFIS to extend its activities. Before HIFIS will go into this direction, the SAB recommends to clarify potential new roles and responsibilities with existing ones at the Helmholtz centres. In the short term, the SAB does not see HIFIS becoming “the responsible entity for security within Helmholtz”. Instead, the SAB suggests HIFIS to focus potential new cyber security activities specifically in the area of promoting best practices in setting up and maintaining Cloud Services, as well as dedicated support on secure coding as part of the Software Services.
- **Infrastructure Platform:** The SAB understands there is no significant funding for physical resources foreseen as part of the HIFIS budget. In addition, HIFIS clearly demonstrated its ability to cope with the infrastructure provided as in-kind contributions by its partners. In the long-term, the SAB considers this a potential risk to the success of HIFIS, e.g. when commitments for physical resources cannot be extended by the partners. To ensure HIFIS services will be sustained not only with a rich set of features and capabilities but also on an attractive infrastructure platform, appropriate funding mechanisms need to be developed. These may include the funding of projects to make scientific services ready to be included into HIFIS. In addition, the funding mechanisms should reflect the up-take of HIFIS services by the end users.