



## **D2.6.2 Periodic Report on SmartAgriHubs Network Expansion by Open Call**

### **WP 2**

10 November 2020

**Reporting on the realization of the SmartAgriHubs open calls. The periodic reports references and compile the material and results elaborated for realizing the open calls. This includes the documentation of evaluation results and selected proposals/teams.**



## Document identification

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## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
<b>CC(s)</b>	Competence Centre(s)
<b>D</b>	Deliverable
<b>DIH networks</b>	Organisations in the DIH ecosystem: CC, technology providers, farmers, Agri-tech SMEs, Universities, governmental agencies, etc.
<b>DIH(s)</b>	Digital Innovation Hub(s)
<b>DoA</b>	Description of Action, the technical Annex to the SmartAgriHubs Grant Agreement
<b>ECA</b>	European Court of Auditors
<b>EMS</b>	Evaluation Management System
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FIE(s)</b>	Flagship Innovation Experiment(s)
<b>H2020</b>	The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation
<b>IE(s)</b>	Innovation Experiment(s)
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>Open Call</b>	SAH planned call for proposals for funding additional actions for network expansion
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	Question and Answers
<b>RC(s)</b>	Regional Cluster(s)
<b>SAH</b>	SmartAgriHubs
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprise
<b>TRL(s)</b>	Technology Readiness Level(s)
<b>WP</b>	Work Package an organizational unit of tasks and activities in the project

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## Project Summary

**Digital technologies enable a transformation into data-driven, intelligent, agile and autonomous farm operations, and are generally considered as a key to address the grand challenges for agriculture. Recent initiatives showed the eagerness of the sector to seize the opportunities offered by ICT and in particular data-oriented technologies. However, current available applications are still fragmented and mainly used by a small group of early adopters. Against this background, SmartAgriHubs (SAH) has the potential to be a real game changer in the adoption of digital solutions by the farming sector.**

SAH will leverage, strengthen and connect local Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) and numerous Competence Centres (CCs) throughout Europe. The project already put together a large initial network of 140 DIHs by building on its existing projects and ecosystems such as Internet of Food and Farm (IoF2020). All DIHs are aligned with 9 regional clusters, which are led by organizations that are closely related to national or regional digitization initiatives and funds. DIHs will be empowered and supported in their development, to be able to carry out high-performance Innovation Experiments (IEs). SAH already identified 28 Flagship Innovation Experiments (FIEs), which are examples of outstanding, innovative and successful IEs, where ideas, concepts and prototypes are further developed and introduced into the market.

SAH uses a multi-actor approach based on a vast network of startups, SMEs, business and service providers, technology experts and end-users. End-users from the agri-food sector are at the heart of the project and the driving force of the digital transformation.

Led by the Wageningen University and Research (WUR), SAH consists of a pan-European consortium of over 160 Partners representing all EU Member States. SAH is part of Horizon2020 and is supported by the European Commission with a budget of €20 million.

# Executive Summary

The SmartAgriHubs Open Calls are prepared and realised by WP2 in close collaboration with the other work packages:

- WP1 – DIH Ecosystem Building:  
Preparing the announcement of open calls via the SmartAgriHubs website, the portal and innovation forum. Jointly realising webinars for open call presentation and direct interaction with proposers.
- WP3 – Monitoring & Evaluation of Innovation Experiments  
Preparing the monitoring and evaluation as basis to assure a proper dissemination as well as to decide on the appropriate implementation of the work defined in the sub-grant agreement.
- WP4 – DIH capacity building and monitoring  
Preparing the DIH self-assessment and promoting the realisation of DIH peer reviews during the realisation of the proposed activities by the DIHs.
- WP5 – Competence Centres  
Discussing and contributing to the support of IEs by Competence Centre, that will be facilitated by related tools.
- WP 6 – Project management  
Preparing the sub-grant agreements, facilitating the project management and reimbursement of proposed activities. At the same time, the management of
- WP7 – Ethics requirements  
Highlighting any ethics related questions that might arise during the proposal evaluation and negotiation for being able to implement related measures in the contract documents.

The baseline for being able to facilitate the realisation of open calls as well as enabling the appropriate implementation of selected proposals, is to carefully prepare the open call related documents and manage the evaluation and selection procedure. In the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> reporting period, WP2 was refining the main procedures and guidelines for the evaluation and selection of proposals submitted in the scope of the open calls.

However, in the light of the CORONA COVID-19 crisis, it is essential to further stimulate the development of digital innovations, which can tackle the challenges currently faced by the agri-food sector. Considering this, SmartAgriHubs continued the refined three-phase open call programme also in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reporting period. The proposal evaluation and selection in the first phase is accomplished and some 21 new teams were selected to realise hackathons, challenges and COVID-19 mitigating solutions. Subsequently, WP2 started the RESTART and EXPAND phases with publishing the open calls on July 8<sup>th</sup> 2020 that is open on a continuous submission scheme until July 2021.

Deliverable D2.6.2 also includes the specific open calls for the RESTART and EXPAND phases. These open call documents are included in this deliverable. Additional information is presented in Deliverable D2.7 that is rather compiling the general principles to be followed by proposers and presented in the open call programme document that shall remain widely stable.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose and Objective

The baseline for being able to facilitate the realisation of open calls as well as enabling the appropriate implementation of selected proposals, is to carefully prepare the open call related documents and manage the evaluation and selection procedure. These had to cope with a multi-phase open call design that was developed in the light of the CORONA COVID-19 crisis. Since as it is essential to further stimulate the development of digital innovations, which can tackle the challenges currently faced by the agri-food sector.

Considering this, SmartAgriHubs has investigated the possibilities for funding innovation that helps our sector in these trying times. Therefore, the SAH Open Calls are designed as a three-phase programme. The first phase is the RESPOND phase. Thereafter, the second and third will follow, namely the RESTART and EXPAND phase will provide more opportunities for applying for the open calls as presented in the following Figure 1.

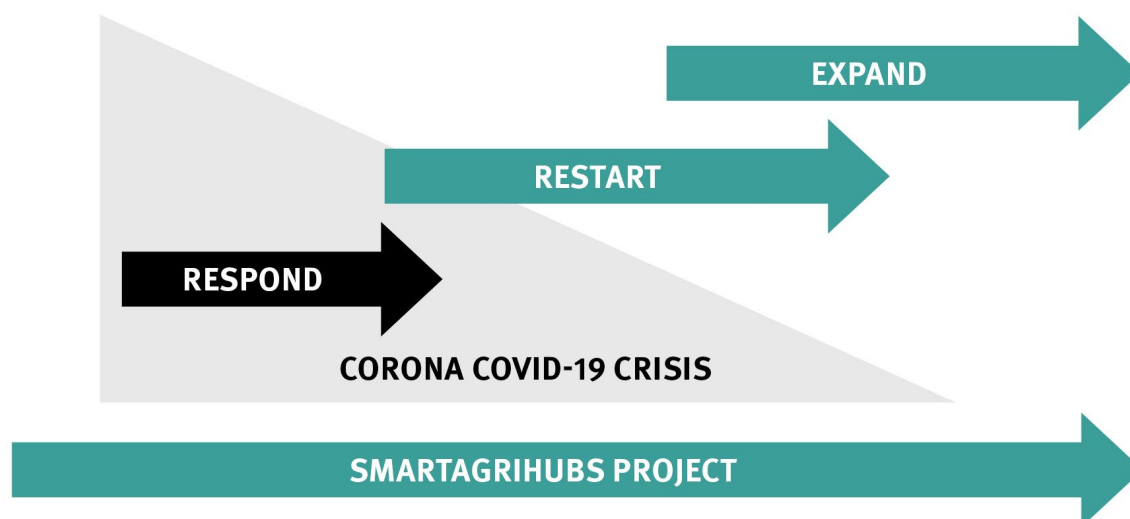


Figure 1: SmartAgriHubs three phase open call programme.

In the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> reporting period, WP2 was further refining the main procedures and guidelines for the evaluation and selection of proposals submitted in the scope of the open calls. Moreover, WP2 was finalising the detailed design and documents required for the RESTART and EXPAND open calls. This was also the baseline to facilitate collaboration with the other work packages in the promotion and realisation of the open calls:

- WP1 – DIH Ecosystem Building:  
Preparing the announcement of open calls via the SmartAgriHubs website, the portal and innovation forum. Jointly realising webinars for open call presentation and direct interaction with proposers.
- WP3 – Monitoring & Evaluation of Innovation Experiments  
Preparing the monitoring and evaluation as basis to assure a proper dissemination as well as to decide on the appropriate implementation of the work defined in the sub-grant agreement.
- WP4 – DIH capacity building and monitoring  
Preparing the DIH self-assessment and promoting the realisation of DIH peer reviews during the realisation of the proposed activities by the DIHs.
- WP5 – Competence Centres  
Discussing and contributing to the support of IEs by Competence Centre, that will be facilitated by related tools.



- WP 6 – Project management  
Preparing the sub-grant agreements, facilitating the project management and reimbursement of proposed activities. At the same time, the management of
- WP7 – Ethics requirements  
Highlighting any ethics related questions that might arise during the proposal evaluation and negotiation for being able to implement related measures in the contract documents.

This Deliverable D2.6.2 is an update of the initial deliverable D2.6, including the two specific open calls RESTART and EXPAND that were published on July 08<sup>th</sup> 2020. The open call documents are included in this deliverable. Moreover, this deliverable is also presenting the results of proposal evaluation of the RESPOND open call. Additional information about the open call principles is presented in Deliverable D2.7. These principles were designed in a way to be applicable for all the RESPOND, RESTART and EXPAND open calls. Therefore, the principles were compiled in a separate public document that was offered as download in combination to the open call publications. The document was called "SmartAgriHubs Open Call Programme".

## 1.2 Content of this Deliverable

Deliverable D2.6.2 is compiling the following elements that were published via the SmartAgriHubs website and the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal:

- Chapter 2 is detailing the interaction with proposers as well as the different roles of work packages to facilitate the open call preparation and realisation and finally also the involvement of new teams in the SmartAgriHubs project.
- Chapter 3 is providing an overview of the SmartAgriHubs procedure for proposal evaluation as well as the evaluation results of the two RESPOND open calls.
- Chapter 4 is presenting the text of the RESTART Open Call.
- Chapter 5 is presenting the text of the EXPAND Open Call.
- Annex 1 in chapter 6 is presenting the evaluation criteria that shall be used by a team of experts enabling the proper selection of the most adequate proposals. It is divided between the call for proposals asking DIHs to support the realisation of IEs and the calls that will be organised for the realisation of hackathon type of activities.
- Annex 2 in chapter 7 is presenting a basic template for proposal submission. However, this is adapted and refined in accordance to the requirements of each specific open call.
- Annex 3 in chapter 8 is presenting the principles for proposal evaluation that are provided to the evaluators as well as the declaration to be signed by these experts.

## 2 Interaction with Proposers

### 2.1 Promotion of Open Calls to Potential Proposers

#### 2.1.1 Events and Webinars

The SmartAgriHubs Consortium was planning to realise a series of events in all the European regions that are covered by the 9 regional clusters. Especially the SmartAgriHubs cluster leaders were collaborating in the scope of WP1 to exchange experience and to discuss strategies for the promotion of digital innovation services in their regions. This was also used to create synergies with joint events and cross promotion.

The realised and planned workshops were analysed and listed in Deliverable D2.5 as presented in the last reporting period. However, due to the CORONA COVID-19 pandemic, several events were cancelled. This was also true for the main project event as planned in March 2020, to be held in Bucharest. The SmartAgriHubs regions were reacting accordingly and organised several webinars that also included the promotion of the open call.

WP2 was organising launching webinars for the promotion of the RESPOND, RESTART, and EXPAND open calls. The SmartAgriHubs launching webinar (i.e. organised at the day when publishing the open call) was recorded and made accessible via the SmartAgriHubs open call website (<https://smartagrihubs.eu/portal/open-call>). Table 1 gives an overview of the webinars that were organised for the launch of the Open Calls and the presentation of the matchmaking tools in the SAH Portal. There are over 800 registrations, we estimate that over 700 people participated.

*Table 1. Webinars organised for the launch of the Open Calls.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organiser</b>	<b>Event Title</b>	<b>WP2 related Title</b>	<b>Registrations</b>	<b>Addressed Region</b>
15.05.2020 14:00-15:00	Gateway 49 Accelerator	Gateway 49 Open Coffee Talk	Network Expansion by Open Calls	16	Germany
19.05.2020 11:00-12:00	SmartAgriHubs WP1	SmartAgriHubs Open Call Q&As	Network Expansion by Open Calls	115	European
20.05.2020 11:00-12:00	FIWARE Foundation	SmartAgriHubs COVID Webinar	SmartAgriHubs RESPOND Open Call	109	European
18.06.2020 10:00-15:00	DEMETER & ATLAS Projects	DEMETER & ATLAS WEBINAR	Overview of Cascade Funding opportunities - SmartAgriHubs	300	European
24.06.2020 15:00-16:00	Plant InterCluster	PIC Conference	How to manage cascade funding projects for clusters and SMEs	118	North West Europe
29.06.2020 14:00-16:00	Regional Cluster Ireland and UK	Smart Agri Hubs Tour	Network Expansion by Open Calls	32	Ireland & UK
30.06.2020 13:00-14:00	SmartAgriHubs Regional Cluster France	Webinaire d'information du Cluster France	Retour d'expérience sur l'appel à projets RESPOND & Les appels à projets à venir : RESTART et EXPAND	30	France

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organiser</b>	<b>Event Title</b>	<b>WP2 related Title</b>	<b>Registrations</b>	<b>Addressed Region</b>
08.07.2020 11:00-12:00	SmartAgriHubs WP2	Open Call Launch	SmartAgriHubs RESTART & EXPAND Open Calls	103	European
09.07.2020 10:00-12:30	SmartAgriHubs Regional Cluster North East Europe	RC NEE Virtual Tour	SmartAgriHubs RESTART & EXPAND Open Calls for Proposals	28	North East Europe
14.07.2020 13:00-14:00	SmartAgriHubs Regional Cluster Iberia	RC Iberia Virtual Tour	SmartAgriHubs RESTART & EXPAND Open Calls for Proposals	46	Iberia
09.11.2020 11:00-13:30	SmartAgriHubs WP1	Post COVID-19 in the agri-food sector (tbd.)	Selected RESPOND proposals	Open	Europe
24.11.2020 14:00-16:00	Regional Cluster Ireland and UK	AgROBOFood & SmartAgriHubs Open Calls	RESTART & EXPAND Open Calls	Open	UK/Ireland
<b>Total:</b>				<b>897</b>	

To conclude, the number of people registered for the webinars, the visits to the Open Call pages on the SAH Portal and the activity on the forum definitively show to us that there is interest in SAH and the Open Calls.

### 2.1.2 SmartAgriHubs Network and Frequently Asked Questions

At this stage, the SAH network gathers 539 organisations, most of them spread across Europe. From those, 233 are DIHs and 110 are CCs. In comparison to the start of SAH, 93 DIHs have joined the network, of which 19 did so during the RESPOND period. The total of new DIHs is 36% of the 260 target. Figure 2 below shows where the DIHs are located. While there are many DIHs in the Netherlands and Belgium area for instance, there seems to be still room for additional network expansion in Central Europe and Eastern Europe.

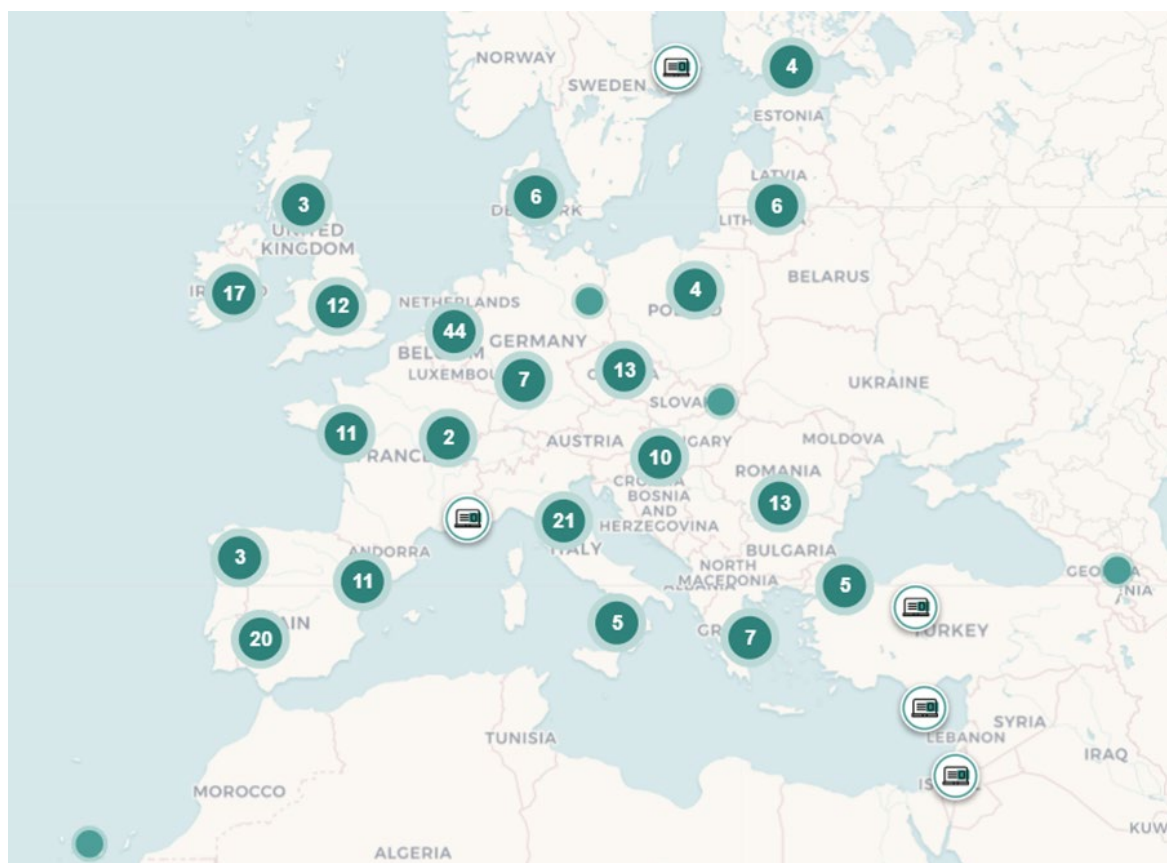


Figure 2. Overview of the location of DIHs across Europe. Source: Network Page, SAH portal, September 1, 2020.

In the SAH portal one landing page was created for the Open Call. The Open Call page published on the SAH website generated a total of 3516 visits by 2632 unique visitors. Within the RESPOND period, there was a total of 595 user visits, which resulted in 5214 pages being visited. Since publishing the RESPOND open call, 33 new topics were created in the Question & Answers (Q&A) section of the SAH Forum for the Open Call.

Those 33 posts had 107 replies. Up to now there were 2,248 views (August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020) in the Open Call Q&A category. Figure 3 shows how the SmartAgriHubs Forum looks like.

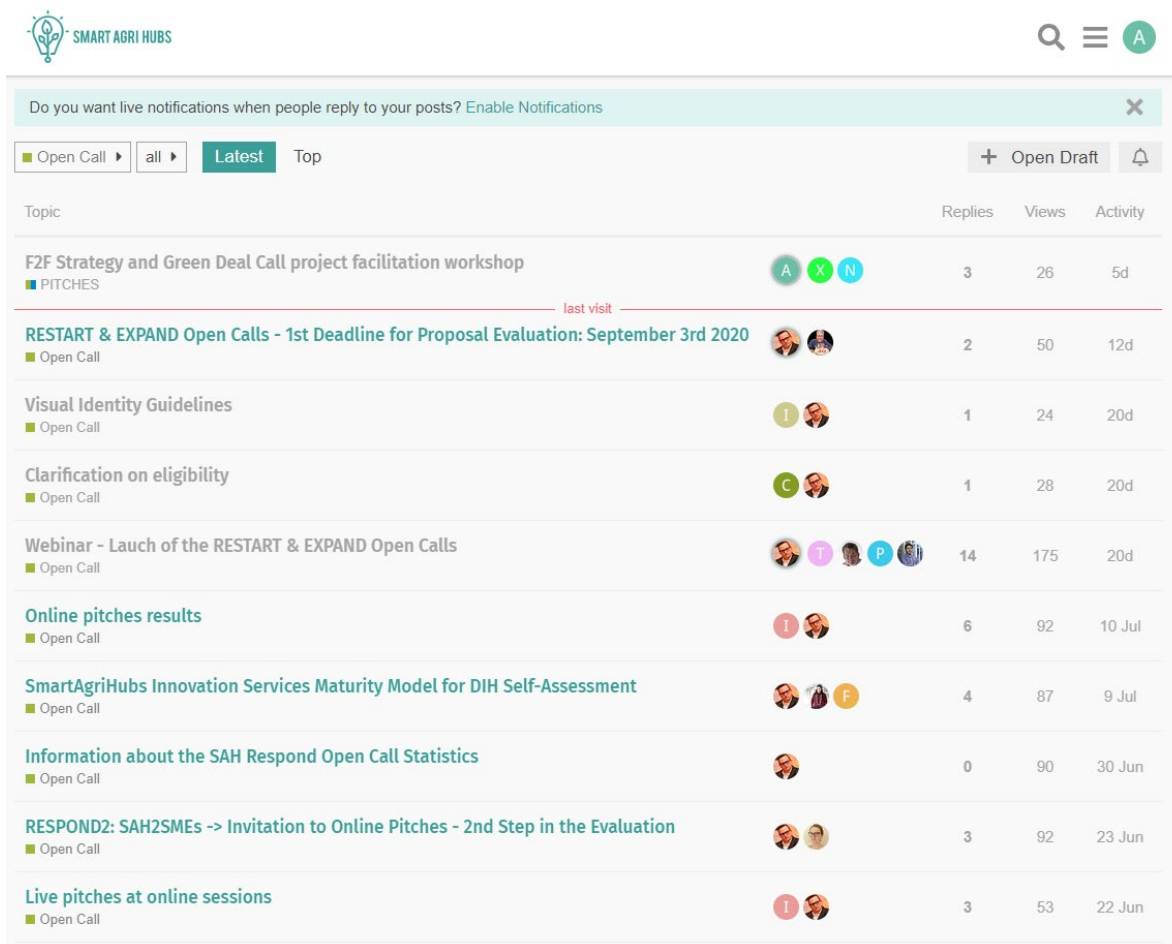


Figure 3. Overview of Open Call Forum in the SAH Portal. Source: SAH Open Call Forum (September 1, 2020).

## 2.2 Role of the different SmartAgriHubs Work Packages

SmartAgriHubs is organised around six work packages that have a clear purpose and work plan. However, to facilitate the overall realisation of the SmartAgriHubs project, the project steering group (PSG) and namely the work package leaders are taking care to discuss collaboration and joint initiatives. This is of specific importance for WP2, since WP2 is highly focused on the preparation, definition, and realisation of the open calls. To avoid redundant efforts, the WP leaders were agreeing on a clear handover and interfaces for collaboration. The main aspects to consider here are presented in the following sections that were followed and further consolidated in mid 2020, to facilitate open call promotion and hand over of proposals to negotiation and implementation.

### 2.2.1 Role of WP3 – Monitoring & Evaluation

Proposers selected in the open call will not be formally assigned to specific groups in a Regional Cluster (RC) and the related meetings. However, they are welcome to join the RCs' activities and will be invited for events.

To engage new projects, WP 3 will invite them for all activities that are organised. However, it is not obligatory for the new teams selected in the open call to join each and any activity. Since taking into account the limited budget of certain proposed activities, it could overburden teams with activities that might have a rather minor relevance for them. Nevertheless, WP3 and related SmartAgriHubs partners organising activities and events will help those teams to specifically identify those activities that have a concrete added value for them or a larger SmartAgriHubs project perspective.

In order to facilitate collaboration and understand the latest status of activities, the new teams shall provide the following to WP3 along with their project realisation:

- After starting their project, providing a short overview of planned activities, deliverables, milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs). This shall help to identify synergies with other SmartAgriHubs projects and a larger stakeholder audience. This overview will also be shared with WPs 1 and 6.
- Providing the accomplished deliverables (i.e. if the type is report) or a short description of the accomplished deliverables at the due date as defined in the sub-grant agreement. WP3 will collect the deliverables and inform WP6 accordingly to facilitate the related release of payments as appropriate
- If not already included in the deliverables, providing short summaries of the achieved milestones and status of achieved KPIs, for each financial reporting period. This will be shared with WP3, but also with WP6.
- WP3 will also provide a pre-defined report as template for this reporting.

Moreover, WP3 will monitor the progress of the projects, specifically by analysing the progress of deliverables, achieved milestones and KPIs. Any deviations identified will be communicated to WP6 as this might have an impact on the release of payments that are managed on a lump sum basis with respect to the defined deliverables. Therefore, WP3 is in the lead for monitoring status and progress of sub-project beneficiaries and their projects, while payments related to deliverables and/or milestones require a confirmation by WP3.

In exceptional cases where indications of underperforming are identified, WP3 may request the support of other WPs in forming ad-hoc review committees to examine in detailed the performance of a sub-project beneficiary. In case that significant under-performance is verified, the ad-hoc review committee will propose a solution to the PSG that will make the final decision.

### 2.2.2 Role of WP6 – Project Management

The contractual management as well as release and transfer of payments is organised by WP6. Therefore, all reporting with respect to deliverables, milestones and KPIs will be used as reference to document the work accomplished and is the baseline to release payments that are done on a lump sum basis with respect to the defined results of the planned work.

Any issues that affect the elaboration of deliverables with respect to e.g. time, content, purpose or target audience shall be communicated by the project to WP1 to analyse the situation, related risks and any impact on the sub-grant agreements.

Any communication with the European Commission or the Research Executive Agency is coordinated by WP6. Generally, there will be no direct communication of sub-project beneficiaries with the EC or REA accordingly. The project coordinator George Beers will facilitate related requests or issues to be handled accordingly.

### 2.2.3 Role of WP4 – DIH Capacity Building and Monitoring

All DIHs involved in related projects selected by the different open calls (i.e. selected in the open calls RESPOND 1 on hackathon type of activities, RESTART and EXPAND) need to realise a DIH maturity self-assessment.

These self-assessments will document the level of maturity of their offered innovation services, using the maturity model and self-assessment tool provided by SmartAgriHubs. The results are either provided within the proposal submitted in the scope of the open call (i.e. for RESTART and EXPAND open calls) or provided during the negotiation process (i.e. RESPOND 1 open call).

During the project, DIHs shall also follow up the self-assessment with a friendly peer-review, based on the procedure defined by SmartAgriHubs. WP4 will inform the related DIHs accordingly and support them with additional information and coaching.

The results need to be shared by the new DIHs with WP4 to enable an analysis of the current maturity level of the overall DIH stakeholder community. This shall help to improve and evolve the SmartAgriHubs academy and the support that is offered by WP4. Moreover, WP4 will invite the DIHs to their activities and events. Sub-project beneficiaries shall also communicate their activities and events to WP4 to facilitate collaboration with other DIHs and identify potential synergies.

The individual results of the maturity self-assessment will be handled confidential and not disclosed by WP4 partners outside the SmartAgriHubs project. The aggregated results shall serve for dissemination of SmartAgriHubs project results.

In cases of missing collaboration of DIHs with WP4 or in cases of contradictory assessment results compared to their organised activities, WP4 will raise a flag, communicated to WP3 and WP6 to further support DIHs in a proper realisation of their projects.

### **2.2.4 Role of WP5 – Competence Centres**

WP5 will support new projects with access to the network of Competence Centres. Soon, a tool will be available via the SmartAgriHubs website that enables the identification of the appropriate competencies that could help to facilitate the realisation of hackathon type of activities as well as the realisation of IEs.

All CCs involved in new projects are encouraged to have an active role to collaborate with WP5 as an active member of the SmartAgriHubs community network. Moreover, CCs shall communicate any planned activities and events to WP5 via the SmartAgriHubs forum to enable the realisation of synergies and collaboration with other CCs accordingly.

### **2.2.5 Role of WP 1 – DIH Ecosystem Building**

As long as the sub-grant agreement is not yet signed, all information, documents and communication with the proposers that submitted a proposal will be handled confidential.

However, as soon as the sub-grant agreement is signed, WP1 will take care for the collection of appropriate information to present the new projects to a wider European target audience. WP2 in collaboration with WP6 will share related results about the new projects and their contact persons.

WP1 will contact the new projects as appropriate. At the same time, sub-project beneficiaries will be invited to use the SmartAgriHubs portal and forum to communicate about their initiatives as well as search for collaboration and synergies with a larger stakeholder network. Moreover, coordinators of the new projects shall communicate all events and planned activities to WP1 to enable a proper announcement and publication via the SmartAgriHubs website.

## 3 Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation is organised by WP 2, involving external experts, following a clear scheme to assure fair competition, avoid conflicts of interest as well as assuring confidentiality of the proposal evaluation itself. Experts need to sign a declaration, explicitly agreeing to the defined principles as also listed in the Annex in chapter 8.

Moreover, proposals must be submitted:

- Electronically through the proposal submission tool,
- In the language stated in the call announcement (ENGLISH),
- At any time before the date and time given as the call closure in the call announcement.

The following sections shortly outline the followed evaluation procedure as well as present the evaluation results of the RESPOND open calls.

### 3.1 Evaluation Procedure of SmartAgriHubs

#### 3.1.1 General Procedure

Before involving experts, SmartAgriHubs will check all proposals if they are eligible. The team in task 2.3 are checking, if proposals were received before the deadline, comply to the requirements as specified in the open call related documents, contain all parts as requested by the proposal template/tool, contain the appropriate combination of partners.

Subsequently, the evaluators are briefed about the procedure, either by email with related material or in online sessions in an interactive procedure. The main reference for the briefing of evaluators and finally the evaluation of the proposals will be the open call text and all related documents which will also be provided to the evaluators prior they start analysing proposals. Finally, experts evaluate the proposals and assess the evaluation criteria as listed in the Open Call related documents. Each of the different criteria will be separately assessed (see also Annex 1 for further information about the Evaluation Criteria).

Due to the deviation to organise the RESPOND open calls in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, also the evaluation procedure was managed rather manually with the help of tabular overviews and exchange of files (e.g. pdf, Word & Excel). However, all evaluation steps were documented to facilitate a tracking and tracing of the evaluation procedure. Finally, the proposals selected for funding were handed over to WP6 to prepare the contract. An overview of the RESPOND evaluation results is presented in the following section 3.2.

#### 3.1.2 Organisation of the RESTART & EXPAND Open Call Evaluation

The proposal evaluation in the subsequent open calls RESTART and EXPAND (see also chapters 4 and 5) is organised with the help of an online tool hosted by a WP 2 beneficiary (i.e. CARSA). They are closely collaborating with the WP leader ATB that is taking care for the administrative procedure to reimburse the efforts of the evaluators.

The following steps are describing the approach for evaluating proposals submitted in the scope of the SmartAgriHubs RESTART and EXPAND open calls.

##### Approach – Step-by-Step

1. Contact individual evaluators by email based on previous involvement in the RESPOND or other open calls as well as advertise the need for evaluators in other channels (i.e. social media, SAH website/forum).
2. For all contacts with evaluators not started in the evaluation management tool (EMS), WP2 sends a notification by email that he/she must register in the EMS as evaluator.
3. Evaluators register in the online EMS:  
[https://smartagrihubs.ems-carsa.com/user/new\\_expert](https://smartagrihubs.ems-carsa.com/user/new_expert)



With the registration in the tool, the evaluators are providing some administrative information, select pre-defined key words detailing their expertise, and upload their CV.

4. ATB needs to be able to access the evaluators' applications for administrative purpose. Therefore, CARSA will provide ATB with an Excel sheet containing the info provided by the experts registered (expertise keywords & contact data) along with their CVs in pdf.
5. ATB needs to check the evaluators' applications, prepare a ranking in accordance to their expertise and select a number of evaluators in accordance to the required amount with respect to number of proposals submitted and availability of evaluators.
6. As soon as ATB selected the evaluators for evaluation, they will receive a document with further details about the open call evaluation procedure by email. In return, the evaluator needs to send a signed page from the received documents, confirming that there is no conflict of interest and representing a non-disclosure agreement (NDA).  
*Note: The signature is not required for evaluators that started evaluation already in previous batches and provided it previously.*
7. After ATB receives the email from the evaluator with the signed page, ATB will send an email to the evaluator with:
  - order from,
  - template for preparing the invoice (i.e. to be used for requesting the reimbursement after each batch evaluation) and
  - request to send the legal entity form if not yet prepared or something changed since last evaluation.

*Note: This step is not required for evaluators that started evaluation already in previous batches and received it previously. When everyone is on board and as required, ATB and CARSA will organise a briefing webinar with all evaluators to inform directly about the whole process, their responsibilities, and key milestones.*

8. After the Call's submission deadline has passed and the eligibility check has been done to all proposals received, CARSA will provide ATB with the list of eligible proposals that are ready to be evaluated. ATB will then assign 3 evaluators per proposal and send back the list to CARSA so each specific assignment can be introduced in EMS. ATB will have to decide who will be acting as Rapporteur and who will be co-evaluators.
9. Via the EMS platform, CARSA sends invitations to the evaluators to accept their assignment in the tool. There are actually 2 levels of invitations, first one is a general one (nothing to be done on their side, it's accepted by default, they're aware of generalities already since they signed their papers with ATB), and a second invitation where they commit themselves (again, this time in the platform) to evaluate proposals within that Open Call.
10. CARSA assigns proposals to evaluators in the EMS platform following the list provided by ATB in point 8. This 12<sup>th</sup> step cannot be finished until all evaluators have completed step 11, that is, until they all have accepted their assignment (to be evaluators) in the tool.
11. CARSA will make then all proposals visible to the evaluators so they can go, check, have a look at the technical document, download it (if necessary) and confirm of not having any conflict of interest. In other words, they have to accept the evaluation of each proposal (one by one).
12. CARSA will open "officially" the evaluation process in the tool. Now, the online evaluation forms will be accessible for everyone. CARSA will inform the evaluators by email that they can start the evaluation. This 12<sup>th</sup> step cannot be triggered until all evaluators have accepted to evaluate all their proposals.
13. The evaluator should follow the evaluation process (the evaluation process contains 3 evaluators) and will be based on a Consensus process. After finalizing individual evaluations of the projects the evaluators have access to the co-evaluators Individual

Evaluation Reports. They need to have a look at them before discussing the content of the ESR. In any case, the process would then go as follows:

1. The **evaluator chosen as Rapporteur**, sets up a conference call with **the other Evaluators** to discuss the ESR. Bearing in mind each one's individual evaluation, he/she might want to elaborate a draft and even share it in advance so they can prepare the discussion. We leave it up to the evaluators to organize this the best way they consider.
  2. Once reached an agreement during the conf. call on both, the final scores per criterion and the corresponding comments, **Rapporteur will introduce the data in the EMS Platform**. The Rapporteur has an additional tab in the tool's left-hand menu named **"Produce Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)"** to do so.
  3. Once that has been done **by the Rapporteur** in the EMS Platform, **the two other Evaluators** will have to log in, go to **see the ESR produced and Accept it**. Please, **if anyone of the evaluators rejects the ESR**, a process iteration will commence, meaning they will have to communicate again, **the Rapporteur will have to elaborate a new ESR in the Platform** and the other evaluators will have to Accept. CARSA will be monitoring the process through the EMS platform, which is able to inform if something is missing or if an action is expected from any evaluator. Therefore, CARSA will make sure everyone is aware of their duties and contact via email/telephone in case an expected action is having a delay.
  4. Once the **other 2 evaluators** have accepted the ESR elaborated by the Rapporteur, **CARSA, as member of the SAH project and administrator of the EMS tool for this Call (CARSA)**, will have a look at the ESR the 3 evaluators agreed upon, confirm everything is in order and finalize the whole process. Equally, if CARSA has to push back the agreed ESR (for whatever reason), another process loop (iteration) will have to run. The evaluators need to make sure whatever decision they take that there are enough comments for each criterion and that the corresponding scores are consistent with the comments.
- 14.** After finalisation of the ESR, the proposals will be ranked. Proposals over threshold will be selected for funding as long as budget is available for funding. CARSA sends the ranking to ATB in an Excel Sheet. This is the automatic ranking generated by EMS, which contains ideally 3 types of proposals (proposals approved – score over the threshold; proposals not approved – below threshold; and proposals not eligible). ATB validates the listing and informs CARSA about the proposals that are selected for funding. CARSA confirms the ranking in the tool, indicating which ones have been selected.
- 15.** All proposers will receive their ESR. The EMS platform starts sending out notification emails automatically to all proposers. Of course, there will be at least 3 types of notification texts. One for those successful, another one for those not successful (here there could be a variant which is "successful, but not enough budget available", and a final one for those not eligible. These texts are prepared for the individual open calls in advance so CARSA can introduce them in the system prior to the Results communication. This is where WP2 includes a brief explanation about next steps for the proposal selected for funding (e.g. procedure for contacting the teams and contract negotiation/ preparation).
- 16.** ATB will be informed about the resulting details (ESRs, ranking) also providing the received full proposals for documentation purposes. CARSA will upload the proposals in a private folder of an ATB DropBox. Moreover, CARSA exports an Excel sheet from the EMS platform with all the information about the selected proposals and upload it accordingly. However, proposals won't be send by email to avoid access by external parties to the confidential information.
- 17.** ATB will organise the handover of proposals selected for funding to WP6, enabling the colleagues to start the contract preparation.
- 18.** As soon as the evaluation is done, ATB will send an email requesting the invoices from evaluators. The reimbursement is defined as follows:

- **Half-day for preparation** (4 hours) of proposal evaluation in total for the RESTART and EXPAND open call, to get acquainted with the open call documents and principles. We would reimburse this only once, also in case of several evaluations at different dates for evaluation of proposals until July 2021.
- **RESTART** open call:
  - 2 hours for evaluation and consensus with other evaluators
  - 0.5 hours additional effort for the rapporteur
- **EXPAND** open call:
  - 3.5 hours for evaluation and consensus with other evaluators
  - 0.5 hours additional effort for the rapporteur

The following material was offered for proposers and evaluators to get familiar with the open calls:

- SmartAgriHubs Website announcing the open call  
<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/open-call>
- Open Call Programme Document – most of this document remained the same, compared to the RESPOND open call
- RESTART Open Call Fiche – Outlining the specific conditions of the RESTART open call
- EXPAND Open Call Fiche – Outlining the specific conditions of the RESTART open call
- “RESTART & EXPAND FAQ document”, answering typical questions of proposers, as well as interactively answering questions in the SmartAgriHubs forum.

## 3.2 Evaluation Results of the RESPOND Open Calls

The organisation of Open Calls to attract new IEs is a strategic approach to expand the network and improve the maturity of the innovation services offered by DIHs. We hereby analyse the proposal stage of the RESPOND Open Calls by reflecting on the number of successful proposals, the total number of proposals submitted, the regional spread of the proposals and the number of countries involved.

### 3.2.1 SmartAgriHubs Open Call RESPOND1 to the COVID-19 Crisis

The RESPOND1 open call was calling for hackathon type of activities. It was published on May 12th and closed on June 3rd. SmartAgriHubs was receiving 31 proposals from 15 countries (considering only coordination country), and of these, Romania, Spain, Portugal and France were the ones with the highest number of proposals as show in Figure 4.

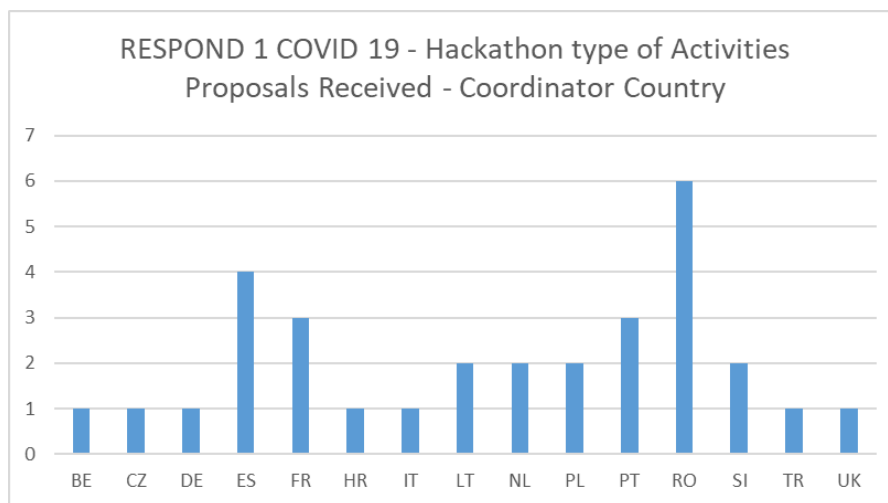


Figure 4. Number of proposals submitted in the RESPOND1 open call sorted by the coordinators' origin.

Proposals were also addressing multiple countries, involving related DIHs and aiming to address the local stakeholder communities while benefiting from a larger international perspective. In total, the submitted proposals were addressing 22 countries, with Romania, Spain and Portugal with the highest involvement, followed by France, Hungary and the Netherlands with the same number of involvement (3 proposals each), as shown in Figure 5 below

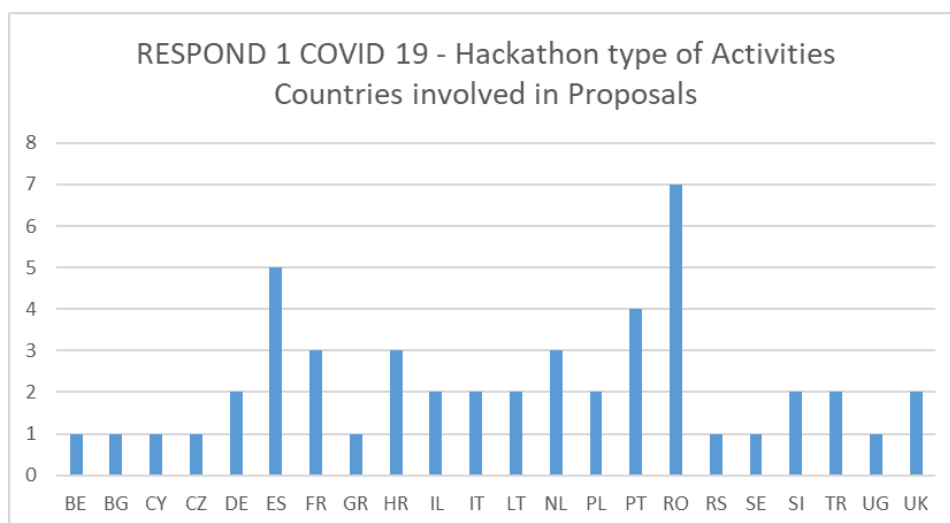


Figure 5. *RESPOND1 - Countries involved in Proposals.*

The open call offered 10-30 kEUR funding for the realisation of individual projects, where teams can ask for a funding of eligible costs at rates of 70 or 100% (i.e. in relation to their status as for-profit enterprise or non-profit organisation). In total, SmartAgriHubs was assigning a total amount of max. EUR 300,000 to 500,000 Euro funding for the overall open call as appropriate to realise initial hackathon type activities to RESPOND to the CORONA COVID-19 crisis. Based on the proposals received, the following Table 2 is listing the related characteristics of all proposals.

Table 2. *Characteristics of proposals received in the RESPOND-1 open call.*

<b>RESPOND 1 OC Characteristic</b>	<b>Values from proposals received</b>
Proposals received	31
Average # of partners	2.9
Average total budget	36,758 EUR
Average Requested funding	27,747 EUR
Average funding rate	87.4%
Average duration proposed	5.2 months
Requested types of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hackathons: 81%</li> <li>• Challenges: 15%</li> <li>• Datathon: 4%</li> </ul>

In addition to the analysis of the received proposals, WP2 also analysed the selected proposals. The following Table 3 is listing the characteristics of the selected proposals that also negotiated a contract with the SmartAgriHubs project consortium. All projects started already and will be finalised in the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021.

Table 3. *Characteristics of proposals selected for funding in the RESPOND-1 open call.*

<b>RESPOND 1 OC Characteristic</b>	<b>Values from selected proposals</b>
Proposals selected	13 (42%)
Average # of partners	2.8
# Countries addressed	19
Average total budget	31,476EUR
Average Requested funding	28,444 EUR
Average funding rate	91.8%
Total Funding requested	369,772 EUR
Average duration proposed	5.3 months
Requested types of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hackathons: 85%</li> <li>• Challenges: 15%</li> </ul>

SmartAgriHubs is supporting the network expansion and related matchmaking with events in the different regional clusters. Therefore, we also analysed the relation of proposals with respect to the origin of the coordinators, the addressed countries as well as how often the countries in a region were addressed by the proposals received.

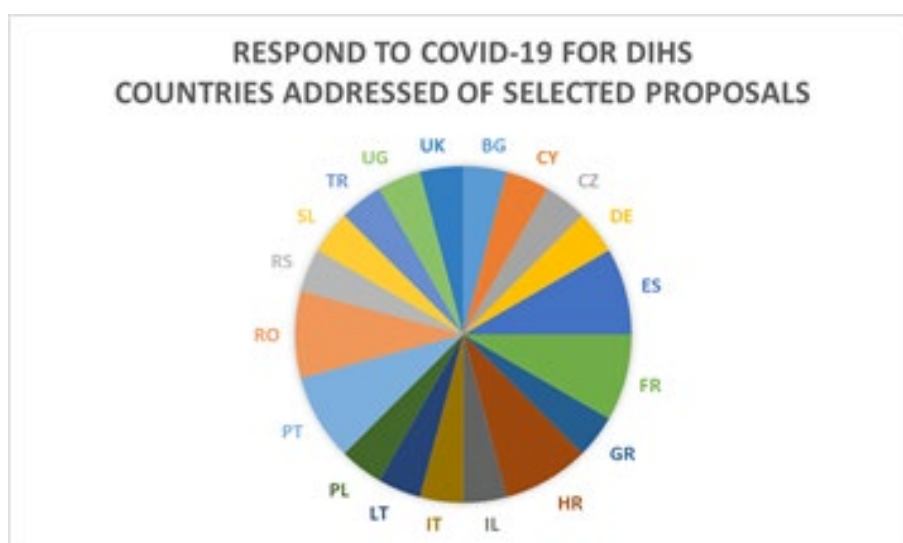
There is a wide spread of 22 countries that presented in the proposals (see Table 4). Except for RC Scandinavia all RCs are represented. RC South-East Europe has the highest number of proposals, followed by RC Iberia.

Table 4. *Proposals in relation to the SAH Regional Clusters, by Coordinators, Participants, and number of proposals per country.*

Regional Cluster	Proposals by Coordinators		Countries Addressed	Occurrence of Countries in received Proposals
	Country	# of Proposals		
Central Europe	CZ	1	CZ	1
France	FR	3	FR	3
Iberia	ES, PT	7	ES, PT	9
Ireland & UK	UK	1	UK	2
Italy & Malta	IT	1	IT	2
North-East Europe	LT, PL	4	LT, PL	4
North-West Europe	BE, DE, NL	4	BE, DE, NL	6
Scandinavia	-/-	-/-	SE	1
South-East Europe	HR, RO, SI, TR	10	BG, CY, GR, HR, IL, RO, RS, SI, TR	20
Outside Europe	-/-	-/-	UG	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>49</b>

From the 31 received proposals, 4 were considered not eligible, either since some of the requirements defined in the Open Call documentation were not followed by these proposals or withdrawn during the proposal evaluation.

Each of the 27 proposals were evaluated by three independent experts based on the evaluation criteria and procedure as published with the Open Call text. Based on the experts' evaluation, 13 proposals were selected for funding, representing a total of 42% of proposals accepted in comparison with the number of received proposals. Furthermore, of those selected proposals, Romania, Spain, Portugal, France and Hungary are the ones with the highest involvement, as shown in Figure 6 below.



*Figure 6. RESPOND1 countries addressed by selected proposals.*

We also analysed the representation of Regional Clusters (RCs) in the selected proposals as presented in the following Table 5. All RCs are addressed by the selected proposals, even though RC Scandinavia did not coordinate a proposal. Most proposals are coordinated by coordinators from RC Iberia. Still, after selection, 22 countries are involved through the RESPOND1 for hackathon activities, offering a diversity of activities in the period from July to December 2020, helping to promote the realisation of innovation experiments. RC NWE and RC SEE have the lowest rate of selected proposals, 25% and 20% respectively.

*Table 5. Number of selected proposals and countries addressed in relation to the SmartAgriHubs regional clusters.*

<b>Regional Cluster (RC)</b>	<b>Countries Addressed</b>	<b># of Proposal Coordination by RC</b>
Central Europe	CZ	1
France	FR	2
Iberia	ES, PT	3
Ireland & UK	UK	1
Italy & Malta	IT	1
North-East Europe	LT, PL	2
North-West Europe	DE	1
Scandinavia	SE	0
South-East Europe	BG, CY, GR, HR, IL, RO, RS, SI, TR	2
Outside Europe	UG	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>

This diversity of topics is shown by a range of challenges found in the 13 selected proposals. Challenges addressed in relation to COVID-19 are the following:

- Improved efficiency, food safety, product traceability to prevent agricultural and food waste, while managing food surplus
- Logistics of fresh food combined with circular economy principles
- Improving/reducing use of resources, transport costs, and improving distribution of goods
- Improve remote and non-contact solutions for farmers, local food supply chains and associated stakeholder
- Online co-creation program
- Mobilizations of talent in different areas
- Bring together farmers, cooperatives, food producers and short food supply chains, also creating cost-effective short food SC
- Supplying farm products directly to consumers, by Short Food Chains
- Find practical solutions using the knowledge of farmers, traders and consumers as a joint target group
- Constructing collaborative platform for implementation of digital solutions, technologies, experiences
- Assembling students, startups, employees of existing companies to work on practical needs of the sector

## SmartAgriHubs – Deliverable D2.6.2 (Confidential)

These results were also presented in the webinars to promote the subsequent open calls RESTART and EXPAND that were opened on July 8th 2020 and will be closed in July 2021.



## SmartAgriHubs – Deliverable D2.6.2 (Confidential)

Out of the 31 received proposals, SmartAgriHubs selected 13 proposals for funding in the scope of the RESPOND 1 open call. The following Table 6 is listing key information and the evaluation summary. The table is sorted in alphabetical order by the Acronyms.

*Table 6: Proposals selected in the scope of the SmartAgriHubs Open Call "RESPOND1 to the COVID-19 Crisis".*

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Ctry</b>	<b>Evaluation Summary</b>	<b>Requested Grant</b>
3F	The Future of Farm to fork - digital solutions for short food chains	PL	<p>Hackathon in Poland for supplying farm products directly to consumers. The main topic is Short Food Chain, specific challenges are to be defined on a planned workshop. It provides a well defined problem to solve using the Hackathon at the centre. It has a well thought out project plan and a convincing approach to mobilise solution providers and other stakeholders.</p> <p>There is little detail on the support given to participants before and after the hackathon event. The reuse plan/concept isn't clear.</p> <p>At each stage of the event mentors will be involved in order to verify the feasibility of ideas, evaluate functionality of the solutions, and work on perfecting developed business models.</p> <p>Wide range of possible stakeholders without commitment. There is own financial contribution planned. Support services are not listed, a common text is included. Team of 3 key individuals. Feasible plan - ending in December 2020. Milestones and deliverables are defined. Some parts of the text are not so clear in terms of intention.</p>	29.925
AgrIsland Hackathon	Agri-food solutions using island-centred design in three Islands, Canary, Madeira and Azores Islands	ES	<p>The proposal objective is relevant to the call. Challenges and needs are well identified. The concept is sound and credible. The target is ambitious. The hackathon will be open for all solution providers. Exact topics are not defined (a round table is planned) but specific problems are listed. The expected technological solutions should respond to the main issues affecting islands being "island-centred" such as solutions improving the management of soil, collaborative use of resources, bringing down transport costs, improving the distribution of goods, decreasing water losses, enhancing the traceability of goods or reducing the environmental impact of products.</p> <p>First 15 solutions will benefit from ""Design Factory"" support programme established by one of the stakeholders. End users are involved through representatives. The proposal states it will provide a roadmap involving ongoing and accessible mechanisms to support selection solutions to go the market.</p> <p>DIH support provisioned is clear. Proposal will involve a wider audience of stakeholders and their commitment is well explained. End users and technology providers involvement approach is detailed explained.</p>	29.750

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
			<p>The budget is too generic and lack of details about the costs. Also there is no information about own resources involvement or additional investments and external finding is foreseen to be attracted.</p> <p>The project participants are complimentary and their involvement is justified.</p>	
FARM2FORK HACK	Hacking sustainable, safe and environmentally friendly food production and supply in SEE as a fight against pandemic scenarios	SL	<p>This proposal develops a hackathon at the level of the SEE region where it will involve farmers, cooperatives, food producers, and short food supply chains. It presents very serious challenges that can be a starting point for the transformation of agri-food systems in the future. COVID-19 in this sense is a wake-up call. The timetable is very challenging but the CV of the partners might allow such a planning. The team present is excellent. Very complementary and address knowledge on the Enterprise Europe Network ICT sector, promotion of the European Research, experience in ICT in Agriculture and partnerships between SMEs and knowledge partners. The FARM2FORK HACK methodology is based on 5 stages and that enables the described deliverables.</p>	30.000
FoodLog Proximity	Improve short food supply chains management through digital innovations	FR	<p>The relevance is grounded in accordance with the practical needs of production planning and rapid distribution of products. It would be better if the contribution of the proposal was also linked to larger objectives. It is planned to perform a needs assessment first. The mechanism for attracting consumers at an early stage (i.e. needs) by involving local authorities is not very clearly defined. However, this is quite clearly defined in terms of the perception of the results - i.e. reuse.</p> <p>The envisaged support contains mainly a general description of the basic services of the proposing DIH, but the implementation plan provides for 2 days for brainstorming as well as on finding partners and funding.</p> <p>According to the budget, the efforts are distributed among the three non-business partners. No own funding is foreseen.</p> <p>The budget and the implementation plan are clear / comprehensive, deliverables and milestones are defined. The team has competences in the area of the proposal, but it would be more convincing if it was included food expertise as well as role definition. Therefore, it is a shortcoming that none of the involved persons has a background in agriculture.</p>	27.625
H4F	HACK4FOOD - To Feed The Future	IT	<p>The proposal aims at stimulating the development of digital innovations in order to tackle three identified challenges currently faced by the Agrifood sector in the Emilia-Romagna region, addressing opportunities and threats with respect of COVID-19 pandemic and fit well with topics of bigger scale.</p>	29.800

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
			<p>1. Achieving more integrated agrifood chains and improved efficiency, food safety, product traceability to mitigate the effects of the market downturn in animal, vegetable, fish and aquaculture production;</p> <p>2. Preventing and mitigating the increase in agricultural and food waste generated by the COVID-19 crisis in an economic system already destabilized by the climate change;</p> <p>3. Manage the food surplus for the benefit of those vulnerable groups who have been particularly affected by COVID-19 (e.g. elderly people).</p> <p>The benefit for citizens is not explicitly mentioned but is tangible. Talent mobilization is planned (10 teams, 5 persons each) - startups, R&amp;D employees, farmers, university researchers &amp; students. The partners will share the efforts for talents' mobilization. It is not that clear how the needs of related end-users would be taken into account earlier. The team is proficient. According to the budget, the efforts are distributed among the three non-business partners which should stand for commitment. No own funding is foreseen. The budget required is adequate for activities and tasks and is described for all partners, but the cost assignment is not sufficiently explained.</p> <p>The outputs of the project contribute well to the all expected impact, providing metrics to measure the impact. The proposal has identified several clear and measurable expected impacts. The impact is supported by KPIs, most of which are sound.</p>	
Hack[72h]	The creative marathon to find solutions to local food chain problems emerging from the COVID-19 crisis	FR	<p>The scope of the project correspond to the call topic and scope. The project is targeting to achieve impact not only in Pays de la Loire but also wider region: neighbouring regions in Britany, Centre Val De Loire and Avergne Rhone Alpes. The approach to achieve impact is clear but KPIs for measurement could be better explained. The project activities are relevant to achieve the aims and is defined in accordance with the practical needs of production and the rapid distribution of local products. It would be better if the contribution of the proposal was linked to larger objectives. The goal is to attract all participants - farmers, traders, consumers; as the focus is not to make technological breakthroughs, but to find practical solutions using the knowledge of the participants.</p> <p>The methodology and approach for involving solution providers, end users and other stakeholders could be better explained. Targeted number of solution providers and end users could be estimated.</p>	30.000

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
			The work plan is too generic and lack of sufficient details about the tasks and work assigned to partners. Deliverables and milestones are set but insufficiently described. The time schedule is presented with a diagram - completion in December. The implementation methodology is presented. No own funding is foreseen. The budget is balanced distributed among the project partners, however there is no information if own resources will be involved, if additional investments and external finding is foreseen to be attracted.	
HACK'20	Hack AgriFood 2020: RESPOND to the COVID-19 crisis	LT	<p>The focus is on improved remote and non-contact solutions for farmers, local food supply chains and associated stakeholder. Specific challenges are to be collected and selected from stakeholders. Well-defined plan to attract the solution providers and end-users. Reuse of results is planned. The driven by end-users needs approach is not so explicit. There is additional financial contribution planned. Support services are not listed - a corresponding section is missing.</p> <p>Very relevant and requesting funding to partially support an event, which is executed for the second time. The planning and budget is of high quality as well as the team. Clear targets have been set involving stakeholders and the support provided is of very high quality as it is tapping into an existing setting. There will be direct involvement by end-users (small and medium sized farmers, the agriculture and food industry).</p>	30.000
HAR 2020	RO AgriFood Hacking – HAR 2020 (HAR = Hackathon Agri-food Romania. In Romanian language HAR means talent, skill, gift, ability)	RO	<p>HAR2020 will be the first Hackathon to be organized in agri-food industry in Romania. The project brings added value by integrating needs and facilitating dialogue with key partners from Bucharest, Cluj, Galati (3 major development regions of Romania). The event will consist in a competition of ideas implemented in effective pilot solutions and the 3 winners will also get 6 months mentoring. The results are well indicated in the proposal, however it seems that these results may remain somewhat superficial at the time of implementation and reuse is not clearly explained. The benefit of all this for the producing sector (agricultural origin) is not indicated. The farmer should be an end-user clearly identified and tell the benefit for them.</p> <p>The involvement of public institutions is relevant for the outcome and impact of this proposal. The business case is well described but also quite challenging. There might be some doubts whether all the aims can be realised within the time frame. The project teams brings together all the necessary competences to make the proposal successful; there is little detail on how to attract tech ICT solution providers.</p>	29.888

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
INSPIRE	The COVID 19 INSPIRE Hackathon 2020 - "A hackathon for balancing the imperatives of the present with the demands of the future."	CZ	<p>The expected outcomes and potential impact of the project correspond to the call topic and scope. The proposal uses the the model of the INSPIRE Hackathon, a process that is designed to efficiently exploit the achieved results of previous hackathons on developing new innovations. Plan4all already organised 2 fully virtual hackathon events in spring 2020. The 5 identified topics are very well selected. Very good process of mentoring.</p> <p>The concept is generally sound. The objectives are clear. The approach to achieve impact is defined and some KPIs (number of IEs), deliverable and milestones are set. Most of the actions are relevant to achieve the aims. The methodology and approach for involving solution providers, end users and other stakeholders could be better explained. It is not clear how they are going to be attracted. In addition, targeted number of solution providers and end users could be estimated.</p> <p>The proposal convincingly describe the Support offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders. However, the information about the reusability of results does not give specific insights.</p> <p>The partners are complimentary and have the relevant experience for successful implementation of the project activities</p> <p>The budget required is adequate for activities and tasks and is described for all partners, but the cost assignment is not sufficiently explained. It is not envisaged to be attracted additional investment.</p>	30.000
LL2FRESH	Long Life To Safe Fresh – What to Start and Accelerate?	PT	<p>LL2FRESH is an online co-creation programme that will support the creation of 5 projects with marketing and implementation potential in the food industry; this programme aims to foster the development of proof of concepts of sustainable and scalable technology solutions addressing this to broad challenges. 3 impact challenges will be formulated, capture at least 20 projects, 10 will be supported during the 1st phase of the programme (Empathy Phase) and 5 will develop the MVP with a strong enrolment of the key stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposal indicate there will be a strong involvement of stakeholders but it is not clearly outlining the existing relation to larger stakeholder audience and their commitment to the proposed actions. There isn't a very good explanation how the activity/challenge will be driven by needs of end users - the voice of the market.</p> <p>The budget is coherent with the project activities. The budget is clear, detailed and suitable to implement the proposed actions and it is balanced distributed among the project partners. However no own resources or additional investments is foreseen.</p>	30.000

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
			The partners and team members have the capacity and resources to fulfil their role.	
RADAR	Resilience through Automation and Digital Acceleration in Response to COVID-19	UK	<p>The overall proposal objective is very well aligned and relevant to the call. The proposal aims at the mobilization of talent and enabling realization of digital innovations to answer the current trends in Agrifood sector with respect to Corona Pandemic. Mobilizations of talent is aimed. Focus on Horticulture and Veterinary services - robotics and hardware/software/data.</p> <p>Activity 1, 2, 3 - well defined plan to attract. There isn't a good explanation how the activity will be driven by need of end users. Reuse has special focus in the plan with Post Hackathon group of actions. The technology launch package will continue its support for 12 months following the event, to help ensure the project realises new products and services in the market.</p> <p>The document structure doesn't quite match the required one, even all parts/information can be found, while a too general budget presentation. The budget is too generic and lack of details about the costs.</p> <p>The work plan is accurate and well detailed with aligned deliverables and milestones. The Gantt Chart is clearly outlined with appropriate activities, schedules.</p>	27.238
Strength AgriChain	Solutions that strengthen the supply-demand relationship along the agri-food chain based on circular economy and last mile delivery strategies in times of COVID-19	ES	<p>The proposal presents a focused challenge demanding new digital innovations and solutions mainly in the logistics of fresh food. It is relevant to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic as well as with topics like circular economy principles, promoting sustainability, low carbon footprint chains, and efficient use of resources avoiding food waste. The possible support (mainly technological resources/knowledge) available from the partners is clearly defined but is not mentioned how much efforts (even post-project) may be invested. A financial contribution for prizes is planned in addition from the leading partner. It is stated that the participant is a consortium of 2 DIH's and a PPP-platform POLO. The team and the partners are experienced and include expertise on all aspects of the planned activities. The plan and roles are clear, although terms such as deliverables and milestones are not used nor formulated, in essence the plan contains information on the traceability of implementation.</p> <p>There is little description of the support to be offered by the consortium to the participants, but proper description of the various fields in which the consortium can offer support. The reuse of the results is by sharing them in the SmartAgriHubs innovation portal assured."</p>	28.125
Tackling	F:IGHT against Corona Farmhack:	DE	"The proposed actions are well linked with the project objectives and identified needs. The proposal concept is briefly described and it is relevant to the call. Relevance is	17.421

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
	Innovations Generated through Hackathon-		<p>defined according to the practical needs of the sector. It would be better if the contribution of the proposal was linked to larger objectives.</p> <p>Participants are targeted (students, startups, employees of existing companies), but there is not much information about how they will be attracted. The place of end users in the envisaged initiatives is not found. However, it is envisaged to combine the activities with prestigious innovation initiatives, the support of which is explicitly emphasized - this is expected to be a motivating factor. Mainly pragmatic support is provided through the partners for re-use of the results - for founding a new company, for hiring the team in a supervisory company, for research, etc. Probably little more options could be available in case the idea is not suitable for such a direct implementation.</p> <p>The general support from DIH is mainly expressed in organizational activities, for which, judging by the rest of the presented information, experience and capacity are available. The budget and the implementation plan are clear/comprehensive, deliverables and milestones are defined. The team is experienced in conducting such initiatives, it would be better if it included/expressed some competencies in ICT.</p> <p>The KPIs are missing, metrics and quantitative target are given on the scheme of the project proposal. The work plan is well explained and dully supported by deliverables and milestones. The responsibilities and involvement of the partners is described briefly, however is insufficiently defined the innovation services offered by the proposing DIH. The proposal well define synergies with other events.</p> <p>The consortium enclose a vast majority of competences needed for the proposed work. The complementarity is sound and resources are precisely and well balanced in its allocation."</p>	
<b>Total:</b>				<b>369.772</b>

### 3.2.2 SmartAgriHubs Open Call RESPOND2: SAH2SMEs

This Open call was organised as a pan-European on-line Challenge calling for SMEs to RESPOND to the effects of the crisis and use potential opportunities to fight against the CORONA COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of what digital innovation can contribute to minimize the consequences of the crisis to the European agri-food economy. The strategic objective was to mobilise several SMEs that will develop solutions having a clear pan-European added value and well documented potential for rapid replication.

Therefore, this is an immediate reaction of SmartAgriHubs promoting the realisation of pragmatic solutions, serving as examples for European SMEs’ innovation capacity that can be mobilised in times of need and crisis. The open call was published on May 12th and closed on June 3rd. SmartAgriHubs was receiving 78 proposals with partners from 18 countries, and of these, Spain, Italy and France were the ones with the highest number of proposals as show in Figure 7.

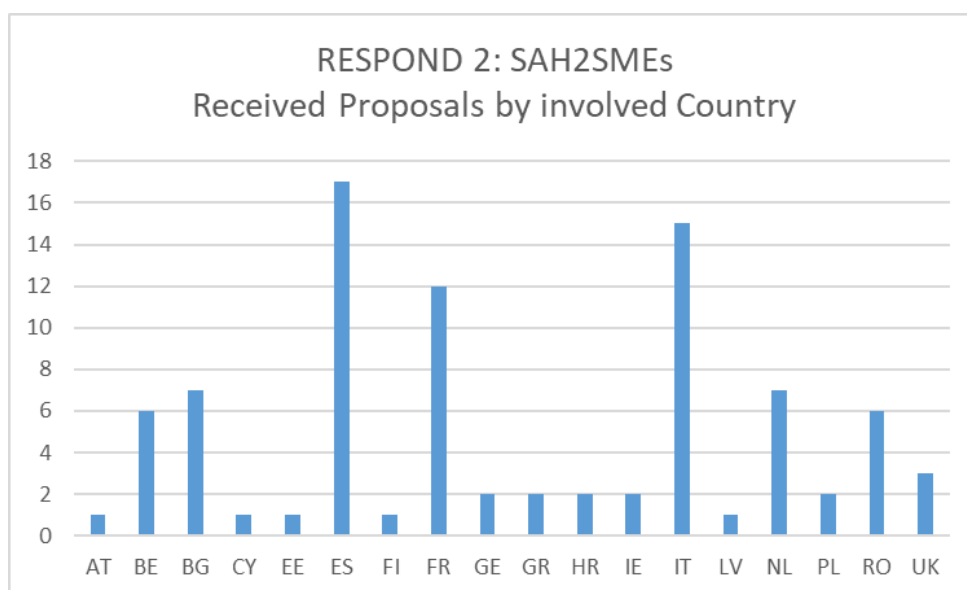


Figure 7. Number of proposals submitted in the RESPOND2:SAH2SMEs open call sorted by countries.

In a first step, all received proposals were evaluated in a remote procedure, involving two evaluators per proposal. Based on this initial evaluation, all proposals were short listed and the best 33 proposals were selected for performing an online pitch. The following Figure 7 is listing an overview of all proposals received in the RESPOND2:SAH2SMEs open call.

Table 7. Characteristics of proposals received in the RESPOND2:SAH2SMEs open call.

<b>RESPOND2: SAH2SMEs Characteristic</b>	<b>Values from proposals received</b>
Proposals received	78
Average # of partners	2.2
Average total budget	74,904 EUR
Average funding requested	44,834 EUR
Average funding rate	68.8%
Average duration proposed	5.4 months
Number of proposals selected for online pitches	33



WP2 was organising an online pitch with the 33 teams that were short listed in the first evaluation step. Each team was able to select a time slot for their pitch from June 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>. Three external experts were attending the online pitch to evaluate each individual proposal. The WP2 WP leader was moderating the online pitch and took care for time management. We planned 30 Minutes for each online pitch, using GoToMeeting as teleconference tool to enable proposers to dial in and present their slides. The pitch sessions were organised in the following steps:

- 5 Min. for dial-in and organisation
- 7 Min. online pitch
- 7 Min. question and answers
- 2 Min. good bye to the team and highlighting next steps
- 9 Min. for the jury to finalise their evaluation

After realising all 33 online pitches, the evaluators were consolidating their evaluations. Based on this, WP2 prepared a short listing of all the proposals that was consolidation in an online consensus meeting with the three experts. The characteristics of the proposals selected for funding are presented in the following Table 8.

Table 8. *Characteristics of proposals selected for funding in the RESPOND2:SAH2SMEs open call.*

<b>RESPOND2: SAH2SMEs Characteristic</b>	<b>Values from selected proposals</b>
Proposals selected	8 (10.3%)
Average # of partners	1.8
# Countries addressed	6
Average total budget	75,325 EUR
Average Requested funding	46,956 EUR
Average funding rate	62.3%
Total Funding requested	375,652 EUR
Average duration proposed	5.4 months

The origin of selected proposers is spread over five different regional clusters of the SmartAgriHubs project. The following Figure 8 is presenting the origin of selected team by the different countries.

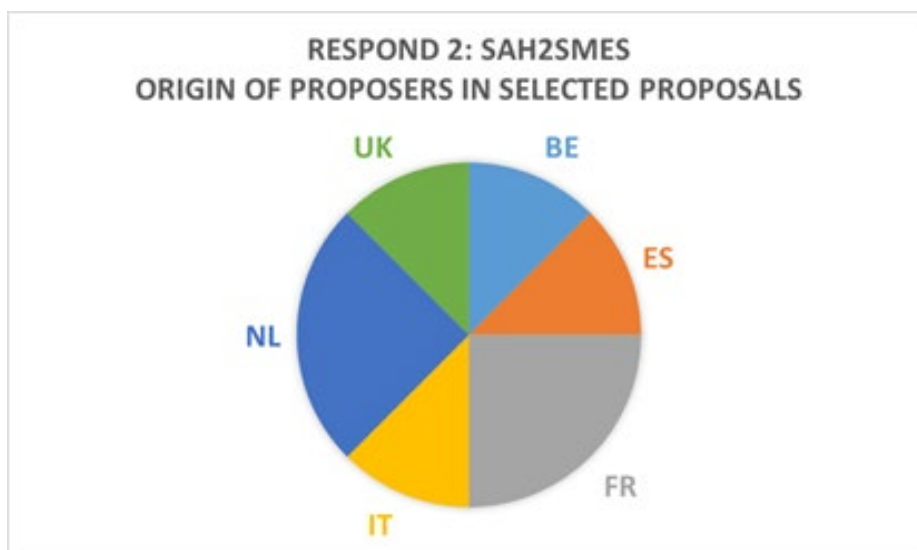


Figure 8: *Origin of selected team for funding in the RESPOND2: SAH2SMEs open call.*

## SmartAgriHubs – Deliverable D2.6.2 (Confidential)

The selected proposals are aiming at the realisation of diverse solutions in heterogeneous settings. The following Table 9 is listing the different topics and origin of the coordinators of the proposals selected for funding.

*Table 9: Proposals selected for funding by the SmartAgriHubs RESPOND2:SAH2SMEs open call.*

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Requested Funding</b>
Close-Cow-Care	Software that enables the farm vet to closer support dairy farmers in managing cow health and production without the necessity of having to visit the farm	NL	42.875
CODIPLAF2F	Cooperative digital platform for farm-to-fork	BE	33.250
FarmSuite	The first farmer-friendly digital platform tailored to organic food systems	IT	49.980
FLOX-cam	Remote visual inspection of poultry farms – improving bird welfare and performance in a post-COVID-19 world	UK	49.847
ROCKET	Smart Fruit Packer Robot	NL	50.000
ROOTS	Connecting Food's ROOTS platform	FR	50.000
sostenibl.es	Digital transformation of SMEs in agri-food sector - Enabling short food supply chains and local food systems	ES	49.700
WiziFarm Mission	Matching platform for agricultural skills	FR	50.000
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>375.652</b>

The topics addressed by the different proposals selected for funding can be summarised as follows:

- Matching platform for agricultural skills
- Farmer-friendly digital platform tailored to organic food systems
- Platform for traceability of food using block chain
- Robot for packing fruits
- Digital transformation of SMEs in agri-food sector to enable short food supply chains and local food systems
- Cooperative digital platform for farm-to-fork
- Enable farm vet to closer support dairy farmers in managing cow health and production without farm visits
- Remote visual inspection of poultry farms to improve bird welfare and performance

All projects started already and will be finalised in the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021.

SmartAgriHubs – Deliverable D2.6.2 (Confidential)

Out of the 78 received proposals, SmartAgriHubs selected 8 proposals for funding in the scope of the RESPOND 2: SAH2SMEs Open Call. The following Table 10 is listing key information and the evaluation summary. The table is sorted in alphabetical order by the Acronyms.

Table 10: Proposals selected in the scope of the SmartAgriHubs Open Call "RESPOND 2: SAH2SMEs".

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
Close-Cow-Care	Software that enables the farm vet to closer support dairy farmers in managing cow health and production without the necessity of having to visit the farm	NL	<p>The proposal aims to develop software to support veterinaries in accompanying dairy farmers remotely. The concept is relevant, enabling vets to minimise physical visits, while still guaranteeing quality of the milk. The solution will be an add-on to an existing platform, which is already operating with 50-70 veterinaries in more than 200 dairy farms. The concept is sound, gathering data manually inserted by the farmers and automatically collected from meters on site.</p> <p>The team has proven knowledge and experience in the dairy domain, and as provider of technology solutions. There is a partnership with a subcontractor, which is the software developer.</p> <p>The work plan is detailed and appropriate to develop the proposed solution.</p> <p>The budget presented includes personnel and other direct costs. It is not clear what is included in each category and where is the subcontracting.</p>	42.875
CODIPLAF2F	Cooperative digital platform for farm-to-fork	BE	<p>The idea is quite good and there is already a platform working in Belgium with considerable traction in terms of registered users and transactions supported.</p> <p>The team presented high IT expertise and experience, but not fully convincing with respect to their competences. However, the ambitions are good and the first successes could already been shown. Additional expertise in business support and marketing are needed to achieve the goal of scaling the platform. But that's probably something they can benefit from joining the SAH network.</p> <p>The budget is appropriate to cover the technical dimension but is missing components to scale the platform. Will the company leverage funding from other sources?</p>	33.250
FarmSuite	The first farmer-friendly digital platform tailored to organic food systems	IT	<p>The proposal aims to develop a platform to support re-routing of produce from organic farms, which had their usual routes compromised during the pandemic crisis. The proposal and solution is very relevant and would support actors (farmers, small shops, restaurants) in recovering from the crisis, since access to new and more direct distribution channels for farmers is indeed a very relevant solution in times of COVID-19. The proposal demonstrates a relevant and experienced team with good connections in the region and especially the focus on ease of use and training of the farmers in usage of the tool is a very positive point. However, the solution itself could</p>	49.980

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
			<p>not yet present features that make it outstanding from other solutions in the market. The solution is simple from a technical perspective, but presents the proper framework, particularly from usability and interoperability perspectives (using bootstrap, context broker, exchange of data in several formats).</p> <p>The team leader is a key player in organic farming, representing 8,000 organic farmers. The team has relevant technical expertise.</p> <p>The proposal plan is excellent and covers all activities needed to develop the solution, keeping users involved in the whole process. The plan also covers demonstration and training, which is key for successful adoption.</p>	
FLOX-cam	Remote visual inspection of poultry farms – improving bird welfare and performance in a post-COVID-19 world	UK	<p>The proposal aims to deliver a solution to monitor and manage chicken sheds and flocks remotely. The proposals claim the solution would decrease the need for a worker to physically walk inside the shed several times per day. This is a very valuable tool for farmers to identify issues in the barn that are causing clustering, health issues and mortality. Questionable is still the actual impact the solution can have to prevent these issues other than simply identifying them, as intervention may still be needed and the worker still has to be on the premises. COVID-19 impact in short term is rather limited as poultry industry is suffering in the field of personnel mainly for other reasons like uncomfortable workplace, low pay and bad image. So the direct relevance for managing the COVID-19 crisis is low.</p> <p>The solution uses camera images, analysed with AI algorithms. The concept is sound and the solution operates in real time.</p> <p>Great team with a good experience in technology, image processing and domain, and includes farms to test the solution.</p> <p>The work plan is appropriate to develop the solution proposed.</p> <p>The budget is presented on a high level, without detailing distribution of efforts over tasks or deliverables.</p>	49.847
ROCKET	Smart Fruit Packer Robot	NL	<p>The proposal is adapting an existing robot that picks fruit to also pack it. The solution is relevant in the pandemic context, as it avoids workers concentrating in the packaging area and also handling the fruit, and could contribute to avoid produce waste. Social aspects could require further consideration during implementation as the solution would replace workers in difficult environments ensuring durable, stable production.</p>	50.000

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
			<p>The solution is based on an existing robot that could be acquired from different vendors (e.g. Siemens, Schneider). The proposers have access to data for apples but may face a challenge in acquiring needed data for pears.</p> <p>The team presents relevant expertise in technology and agriculture. The budget is only presented on a high level, not detailing resources per task or deliverable.</p>	
ROOTS	Connecting Food's ROOTS platform	FR	<p>The proposal aims to deliver a platform for traceability of food using block chain. The concept is quite relevant and the platform has the capability of digitally auditing each batch. The platform already exists in a B2B and B2C perspectives with a proven customer base, which would be extended to cover more products and immediately support local sourcing of products from different sources. This last aspect is quite relevant in the context of the pandemic crisis, supporting smaller producers in selling their goods locally. The solution would perfectly complement other solutions to enable rerouting of local supply and demand. Excellent presentation as well. The direct impact on the COVID-19 crisis is a bit indirect, but in connection with other solutions very relevant.</p> <p>The proposer has already relevant contacts to potential users and is very opened to collaboration with other proposals favouring interoperability to maximise impact. The team seems quite knowledgeable and experienced, although it is not clear who is the company participating and who will do the development.</p> <p>The work plan is very well organised and suitable to support the solution development.</p>	50.000
sostenibl.es	Digital transformation of SMEs in agri-food sector - Enabling short food supply chains and local food systems	ES	<p>The proposal aims to deliver a platform to support SMEs to create their dedicated eShops. The concept is quite relevant in the scope of the pandemic crisis and would enable producers to build or keep their brand and expand selling channels and customer base. However, the proposal lacks sufficient solutions or partnerships for logistics and customer service. There could be collaborations in SAH with other complementary projects/Innovation Experiments.</p> <p>The solution development has already started and has been raising attention in at least two hackathons this year of 2020. The challenge around auditing/compliance could represent a main obstacle.</p> <p>The team is quite good and knowledgeable in IT and the domain. The work plan is appropriate and includes activities to maximise impact and raise interest about the solution (marketing, social media).</p>	49.700

Acronym	Title	Ctry	Evaluation Summary	Requested Grant
WiziFarm Mission	Matching platform for agricultural skills	FR	<p>The proposal aims to deliver a platform to match agricultural skills, i.e. workers and producers. The platform is already running in France with a considerable amount of users and success rate. The proposition is very clear and responds to the pandemic crisis, supporting workers in finding jobs and producers in finding resources to ensure their produce quality and selling. The proposal describes the extensions covered in this specific project, namely translation and refinement of the matching algorithm. They have a first version live already and they need support to expand. They have a partnership with the association of farm workers.</p> <p>The proposal demonstrated impressive relevance and uptake. The planning is very good and reasonable. The team is quite experienced and knowledgeable and the work plan is suitable to cover the activities. This proposal is highly recommended to be supported.</p>	50.000
<b>Total:</b>				<b>375.652</b>

## 4 Published Open Call – RESTART

The Open Call is asking for the submission of proposals for projects that will contribute to a RESTART of the European Agri-Food Economy after the COVID-19 Crisis.

### 4.1 RESTART Call for Proposals

This open call is realised in the scope of the SmartAgriHubs project that received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 818 182 (see also [www.smartagrihubs.eu](http://www.smartagrihubs.eu)). This document compiles the key information about the open call "RESTART".

More information about the overall SmartAgriHubs open call programme, including definitions as well as eligibility and evaluation criteria is provided in the document "SmartAgriHubs-OpenCall-Programme".

**Call Topic:** Open call for hackathon type of activities that will contribute to a RESTART of the European Agri-Food Economy after the COVID-19 Crisis. Proposals shall realise potential opportunities that are addressing the effects of the CORONA COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of what digital innovation can contribute to mitigate consequences in the agri-food domain. Such activities<sup>1</sup> can be specifically:

- Online & offline Hackathons
- Focused Challenges
- Datathons

Proposals can have a direct as well as indirect impact on the effects of the CORONA COVID-19 pandemic.

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**Expected Results:** The main objective is to generate ideas for potential Innovation Experiments that are contributing to a RESTART of the European agri-food economy in the scope of the CORONA COVID-19 crisis. Results of hackathon type of activities can be presented as conceptual implementations or also Minimum Viable Products<sup>2</sup> that can serve as implementation baseline for a follow-up by the involved teams or by other third parties.

The activities shall facilitate networking of organisations and individuals, aim at the mobilisation of talent. All results will be presented in detail via the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal. The owners of the developed intellectual property need to provide a description for publication via the SmartAgriHubs communication channels, specifically explaining the following:

- Realised solution
- Approach for validation
- Involved parties, infrastructure and places
- Value propositions

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<sup>1</sup> *The SmartAgriHubs open call programme provides further information about the definition of those activities.*

<sup>2</sup> *A Minimum Viable Product is the implementation of a product that can be used by the addressed end-user in a real operational environment and must not represent a test, demo or prototype implementation. It needs not to address all end-user requirements, but enough features to satisfy key customer requirements, enabling creation of end-user feedback for future product development and related innovation experiments.*

- ICT challenges/ opportunities addressed
- Software and hardware components developed and/or used

The proposal needs to explain a strategy for the exploitation and ownership of the results (for instance explaining potential open source strategies or in-kind contributions by third parties).

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**Potential Proposers:** Activities shall be proposed by one or several Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH)<sup>3</sup> in accordance to their definition in the SmartAgriHubs open call programme document.

Organisations can only receive funding in maximum of two different projects (i.e. sub-grants) funded by SmartAgriHubs in the scope of the open calls.

DIHs and CCs participating in a proposed project, must register in the SmartAgriHubs portal before submitting a proposal (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/network>), and DIHs need to perform a DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment<sup>4</sup>, providing the self-assessment results as part of the proposal.

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**Available Funding:** SmartAgriHubs considers that proposals for hackathon type of activities requesting a contribution from SmartAgriHubs of 10,000 to 60,000 Euro would allow to support the realisation of single or a series of activities appropriately. The contribution of SmartAgriHubs would represent a max. of 20% of the total budget required for realising the proposed work.

Currently, SmartAgriHubs considers a total amount of max. EUR 500,000 Euro funding for the overall open call as appropriate to realise hackathon type of activities in the scope of the RESTART open call.

Proposals shall allocate min. 75% of the overall budget to the support of small, medium, and micro enterprises and need to explicitly present the overall amount of budget to be assigned to SMEs & startups in their proposal.

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**Eligible Costs:** Reimbursement of eligible costs of selected proposers to prepare, organise and realise the activities (i.e. specifically personnel costs, travel, and other goods and services). The requested funding representing the 20% should be used for personnel costs and consumables to prepare, organise and realise the hackathon type of activities. The additional 80% (i.e. not reimbursed by SmartAgriHubs) represents other budget used e.g. for

- Covering efforts of participating stakeholders (e.g. based on lump sums or also based on funnelling procedures to provide more support to those with more promising results),
- Payment of travel and accommodation for participants or
- Financing consumables required for the implementation of the activities. This could be e.g. data centre usage, rental fees for temporary equipment/infrastructure, devices that can only be used once, but necessary for experimentation (like certain devices for

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<sup>3</sup> *DIHs and Competence Centres (CCs) participating in a proposed project, must register in the SmartAgriHubs portal before submitting a proposal (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/network>). DIH(s) and CC(s) submitting a proposal to SmartAgriHubs need to explain their qualification and the offered service portfolio. It is not required to undergo a specific external certification procedure at proposal stage*

<sup>4</sup> *Using the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Services Maturity Model self-assessment, available in the SmartAgriHubs portal via the "Your organisations" page (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/settings/organisations>). Just press the last growth symbol for the maturity self-assessment displayed besides your organisation name.*



experiments, RFID tags, rumen bolus, specific seeds, fertilizer or pesticides).

Financial support in the form of prizes is not funded by SmartAgriHubs but appreciated to be covered by own sources or third-party funding.

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**Funding Rates:**

Eligible costs can be funded up to a maximum of:

- 100% for non-profit organisations (e.g. research),
- 70% for project partners that are profit legal entities.

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**Reimbursement:**

SmartAgriHubs will reimburse the realisation of hackathon type of activities that need to be defined in terms of expected deliverables (e.g. finalised events), milestones (i.e. timing of activities) and KPI (e.g. number of delivered solutions, supported teams, attracted additional investors) on a lump sum basis.

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**Evaluation Criteria:**

Proposals will be evaluated with respect to:

- Relevance to RESTART the European Agri-Food Economy after the COVID-19 pandemic
- Excellence of the strategic approach to achieve impact in the region
- Number of solution providers and end-users to be attracted
- Reusability of results by stakeholders
- Support offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders
- Excellence of the team
- Quality of project plan and budget

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**Examples for Key Topics facilitating a RESTART:**

Proposals could realise hackathons, challenges and datathons that have a direct as well as an indirect impact to mitigate effects of the CORONA COVID-19 or similar (future) pandemics. By such initiatives, the RESTART of the agri-food economy after the COVID-19 crisis shall be facilitated. The underlying idea is to support the European agri-food economy to better cope with the requirements of the “new normal” and maintain its global competitive position. Examples for topics that would match this underlying strategy are presented in the following:

- Helping specific sub-sectors and regional economies to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic impact, by new digital innovation potentials.
- Stimulating private investments in the agri-food sector and promoting opportunities across the European investment community.
- Proposals in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy that is at the heart of the European Green Deal, aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly.
- Enabling a significant contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals by initiatives in the agri-food economy.
- Introducing principles of circular economy in the agri-food sector.
- Generally disburdening agri-food stakeholders (e.g. farmers) from non-added value tasks, by e.g. automating monitoring and/or control of farming activities.
- Increasing the resilience of the agri-food chain.
- Increasing the availability and the shelf-life of agri-food related products.
- Tracking & tracing of food and related products/items from farm to fork, facilitating regional sourcing.
- Helping consumers to make informed decisions about the selection of their food.

- Facilitating access to data and services for an easier digital innovation in the agri-food sectors

<b>Opening:</b>	Wednesday, July 08 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
<b>Closure:</b>	Wednesday, July 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2021, 17:00 CEST; or at an earlier date, in case the budget that is reserved for open calls in SmartAgriHubs (i.e. for this and other SAH open calls) is completely allocated. If other open calls, with similar or deviating conditions, will be published by SmartAgriHubs, potential proposers can find related information on the SmartAgriHubs website.
<b>Selection of Proposals:</b>	Proposals can be submitted for evaluation until closure of the open call and will be evaluated in batches at regular points in time. Dates and time for the evaluation of batches of submitted proposals will be communicated via the SmartAgriHubs website.
<b>Implementation:</b>	The work shall be implemented until December 2021 or before, for being able to take effect. Other implementation schedules might be considered for funding but would require a detailed explanation and need to add value.

## 4.2 RESTART Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation in the SmartAgriHubs RESTART open call will be organised as single stage evaluation with the involvement of three experts evaluating the submitted proposal. The content of each proposal will be evaluated against the following criteria.

<b>Impact of Proposed Activity</b>	<b>50%</b>
Relevance of the digital innovation related topics for the stakeholders and citizens, in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	30%
Involvement of solution providers, end-users and reuse of results by stakeholders	20%
<b>Activity Realisation</b>	<b>50%</b>
Support offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders	15%
Excellence of the team	25%
Quality of project plan and budget	10%

Each proposal will be evaluated against the abovementioned criteria by three different evaluators. All proposers will receive the numerical score<sup>5</sup> of their evaluation, and a short narrative explanation of the decision. Decisions of the committee will be delivered “as-is” and are not subject to further discussions.

Selected applicants will be requested to present a detailed plan with respect to deliverables, milestones and associated costs. If needed both parties will enter negotiations to agree upon mutually acceptable plan. In case the negotiations are not concluded in a short period of time (e.g. 2 weeks) the proposal will be not considered eligible.

<sup>5</sup> The evaluation will use the evaluation criteria presented above and 6 scores from 0 to 5 as detailed in chapter 3 of the SmartAgriHubs Open Call programme document. In order to be considered for funding, all scores (on a scale from 0 to 5) must be above a threshold of 2 for each criterion, and the total score must be above an overall threshold of 4.

### 4.3 RESTART Open Call: Reimbursement and Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement

Every proposal needs to detail the individual budget plan. Generally SmartAgriHubs will ask the consortia during the contracting phase and before Sub-Grant Agreement signature, to detail the allocation of resources, timetable, milestones and deliverables based upon a pre-defined templates that will be an Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement. Key elements of the requested information that will be part of Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement can be found below. At least the information in these tables shall be provided together with the proposal. Proposers need to decide, if additional details are required for being able to evaluate the proposal accordingly.

Budget Category	Amount
1. Personnel costs	
2. Other direct costs ( <i>travel, equipment, software, services, etc.</i> )	
3. Total direct costs ( <i>Sum of row 1 and 2</i> )	
4. Indirect costs ( <i>25% of Total direct costs</i> )	
5. Total costs ( <i>Sum of row 3 and 4</i> )	
6. Funding requested (max. 20% of the total budget required for the overall implementation of activities)	
7. Additional budget (i.e. not reimbursed by SmartAgriHubs, like prizes for hackathons, third parties' effort, infrastructure sponsored for hackathon realisation, etc.)	

No <sup>6</sup>	Deliverable Name/Description <sup>7</sup>	Type <sup>8</sup>	Estimated Costs in Euro	Delivery Date <sup>9</sup>
1				M# #
2				

No <sup>10</sup>	Milestones	Means of verification <sup>11</sup>	Delivery Date
1			M# #
2	...		

<sup>6</sup> Deliverable numbers in order of delivery dates.

<sup>7</sup> Give a meaningful name, followed by a concise description.

<sup>8</sup> Use one of the following codes:

R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Measured in months from the project start date.

<sup>10</sup> Milestone numbers in order of delivery dates.

<sup>11</sup> Show how you will confirm that the milestone has been attained. Refer to indicators if appropriate.

Depending on the nature of results and envisaged milestones, SmartAgriHubs considers providing an advance payment of 20% from the requested eligible max. funding. The remaining 80% would be reimbursed upon delivery of deliverables and accomplishment of milestones as contractually agreed.

With the submission of the proposal, proposers are accepting that future sub-grant agreements will annex the SmartAgriHubs General Conditions as part of the contract. Further information about the General Conditions as well as about the Sub-grant Agreement and related annexes is presented in the Open Call Programme Document.

## 4.4 RESTART Open Call – Proposal Template

To submit a proposal for Hackathon type of Activities, you need to prepare a description in English language that shall be submitted via the proposal management system. The link is published via the open call announcement on the [SmartAgriHubs Website](#). You can ask open call related questions by using the SmartAgriHubs forum. A dedicated open call category is used for this purpose (<https://forum.smartagrihubs.eu/>). Any individual communication via email shall use the following subject:

- “SmartAgriHubs Proposal Submission – RESTART Open Call – [Proposal Acronym]”

### 4.4.1 Format

Please prepare your proposal text as a pdf file, including the following:

- Title Page
- Proposal text no longer than 5 pages
- One page, listing the budget, deliverables, and milestones, using the tables above
- Optional one extra page with a figure, presenting your proposal graphically with timing, main activities and expected results
- Related pages, presenting the results of the DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment.
- One page per proposer with the declaration for proposal submission signed by every proposer requesting funding from SmartAgriHubs and the SME Self-Declaration (only for SME type of organisations requesting funding).

The proposal shall not exceed 8 pages in total plus the DIH innovation services maturity assessment results and the signed declarations. The pdf file must not be larger than 10 MB.

### 4.4.2 Title Page

Please include the following information in the title page:

- Title of the call topic:  
“SmartAgriHubs Hackathons and Challenges – RESTART Open Call”
- Title and Acronym of your proposal
- Name and webpage of your organisation
- Name, email, telephone number, and address of the contact person
- Date of preparation and version number

## Content of Your Proposal Text

The body of your proposal shall include the following parts:

## SmartAgriHubs – Deliverable D2.6.2 (Confidential)

- Short description/abstract of your idea, clearly outlining the key elements. It shall not exceed 150-200 words.
- Relevance of the digital innovation related topics to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the agri-food economy
- Strategic approach to achieve impact in the regions and to involve relevant stakeholders (e.g. solution-providers, end-users)
- Reuse of results by stakeholders
- Support offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders
- Timing of activities, milestones and related deliverables
- Budget planning
- Short description of partner organisation(s) with website link
- Short description of the team, including CVs of key team members

It is up to you to decide on the most appropriate format for presenting your proposal: plain text, tables and/or graphical presentation. We recommend to add an optional one page with a figure, presenting your proposal graphically with timing, main activities and expected results as well as an optional page for listing details with respect to the budget, deliverables & milestones.

### 4.4.3 Declaration for Proposal Submission

My organisation [*legal name*] declares the following:

- My Organisation will NOT accept any funding or financing aid of more than two sub-grants from SmartAgriHubs in the scope of the SAH open calls.
- My Organisation will NOT request more than EUR 100,000 in total in one or more proposals selected by SmartAgriHubs.
- In case my Organisation is accepted for funding by SmartAgriHubs, we will provide the legal entity form<sup>12</sup> to SmartAgriHubs.

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Place & Date

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Full name in block letters and signature of legal representative

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<sup>12</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legEnt\\_privComp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legEnt_privComp_en.pdf)

#### 4.4.4 SME Self-Declaration

My organisation [*legal name*] is an SME meaning “micro, small and medium sized enterprise” within the meaning of Recommendation 2003/361/EC in the version of 6 May 2003<sup>13</sup>, declaring the following<sup>14</sup>:

- employs fewer than 250 persons
- has an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or
- an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million
- is autonomous and
- is an SME with the meaning of Recommendation 2003/361/EC, also taking into account partner or linked enterprises

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Place & Date

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Full name in block letters and signature of legal representative

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<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/sme\\_definition/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Please tick every box that applies.

## 5 Published Open Call – EXPAND

### 5.1 EXPAND Call for Proposals

This open call is realised in the scope of the SmartAgriHubs project that received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 818 182 (see also [www.smartagrihubs.eu](http://www.smartagrihubs.eu)). This document compiles the key information about the open call “EXPAND the SmartAgriHubs Community NETWORK”.

More information about the overall SmartAgriHubs open call programme, including definitions as well as eligibility and evaluation criteria is provided in the document “SmartAgriHubs-OpenCall-Programme”.

#### Call Topic:

Open call for projects that are proposing initiatives of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) that propose a thorough strategy to support the digital innovation in their region and facilitate the set-up and realisation of Innovation Experiments (IEs), equipped by own investments and supported by additional public and/or private funding.

Besides the individual set up of IEs, it is considered of utmost importance that such supported initiatives:

- Validate the services offered by DIHs and Competence Centres (CCs)
- Facilitate experience exchange and critical mass of the European Network of DIHs and CCs.

The funding that is provided by SmartAgriHubs is exclusively available for developing, maturing, and providing DIH innovation services.

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#### Expected Results:

SmartAgriHubs considers DIHs as key stakeholders that should be attracted by this open call. They should propose projects to promote digital innovation in agri-food that will be realised in their own region or together with other regions. In their proposals, they should identify the sources of additional funds they intend to mobilise, while the contribution of SmartAgriHubs funds shall not exceed 20% of the total investments in the project. The DIH should in total mobilise one part from SmartAgriHubs funding and four additional parts from other public or private funding sources. The proposed project shall result in a specific number of innovation experiments (IEs) directly enabled and supported by DIHs.

Every supported IE shall realise a digital innovation in the agri-food economy, involving the related stakeholders, while being driven by end-users and specifically supported by DIHs and CCs, while the IEs are validating their supporting services.

The proposed activities shall facilitate networking of organisations and individuals, aim at the mobilisation of talent. All results shall be presented in detail via the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal. The owners of the developed intellectual property need to provide a description for publication via the SmartAgriHubs communication channels, specifically explaining the following:

- Innovation experiment and the digital innovations (to be) realised
- Approach for validation
- Involved parties, infrastructure, and places
- Value propositions

- ICT challenges/ opportunities addressed
- Software and hardware components developed and/or used

The proposal needs to explain a strategy for the exploitation and ownership of the results (for instance explaining potential open source strategies or in-kind contributions by third parties).

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**Potential Proposers:** Activities shall be proposed by one or several Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH)<sup>15</sup> in accordance to their definition in the SmartAgriHubs open call programme document.

Each DIH in the team submitting a proposal should have a substantial input in the project of at least 10% of the total requested funding. Subcontractors can also participate, up to a maximum of 10% of the total funding.

Organisations can only receive funding in maximum of two different projects (i.e. sub-grants) funded by SmartAgriHubs in the scope of the open calls.

DIHs and CCs participating in a proposed project, must register in the SmartAgriHubs portal before submitting a proposal (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/network>), and DIHs need to perform a DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment<sup>16</sup>, providing the self-assessment results as part of the proposal.

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**Available Funding:** SmartAgriHubs considers that proposals requesting a contribution from SmartAgriHubs between 100,000 and 500,000 Euro would allow to support the realisation of IEs projects to be addressed appropriately. The budget per DIH shall be limited to a maximum of 100,000 Euro in total within one or several proposals.

Currently, SmartAgriHubs considers a total amount of 2,000,000 to max. 4,500,000 Euro funding for the overall open call as appropriate to realise DIH supported IEs in the scope of the EXPAND the Network open call.

Proposals shall allocate min. 75% of the overall budget to the support of small, medium, and micro enterprises and need to explicitly present the overall amount of budget to be assigned to SMEs & startups in their proposal.

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**Eligible Costs:** The overall proposal budget shall assign a maximum of 20% for DIH service provision and a minimum of 80% for realising the supported Innovation Experiment(s). The maximum of 20% for DIH service provision can be requested as funding from SmartAgriHubs, where the 80% should be mobilised by additional public or private sources. However, if a DIH can prove its role in the acquisition of the IE, they could also include a maximum of 5% of the supporting funding received from SmartAgriHubs for the realisation of the IE.

One DIH could ask for a maximum of 100,000 Euro funding in total from SmartAgriHubs in one or also several proposals.

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<sup>15</sup> *DIHs and Competence Centres (CCs) participating in a proposed project, must register in the SmartAgriHubs portal before submitting a proposal (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/network>). DIH(s) and CC(s) submitting a proposal to SmartAgriHubs need to explain their qualification and the offered service portfolio. It is not required to undergo a specific external certification procedure at proposal stage*

<sup>16</sup> *Using the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Services Maturity Model self-assessment, available in the SmartAgriHubs portal via the "Your organisations" page (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/settings/organisations>). Just press the last growth symbol for the maturity self-assessment displayed besides your organisation name.*



Financial support in the form of prizes is not funded by SmartAgriHubs but if relevant, appreciated to be covered by own sources or third-party funding.

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<b>Funding Rates:</b>	Eligible costs (i.e. in relation to the 20% funded by SmartAgriHubs) can be funded up to a maximum of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100% for non-profit organisations (e.g. research)</li><li>• 70% for project partners that are profit legal entities</li></ul>
<b>Reimbursement:</b>	The reimbursement by SmartAgriHubs will be done on a lump sum basis. Therefore, the proposed projects need to be defined in terms of expected deliverables (e.g. finalised results), milestones (i.e. timing of activities) and KPIs (e.g. number of delivered solutions, supported teams, attracted additional investors).
<b>Evaluation Criteria:</b>	Proposals will be evaluated with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact of Digital Innovation (weighting of 40%)</li><li>• Network Expansion (weighting of 35%)</li><li>• Project Realisation (weighting of 25%)</li></ul>
<b>Opening:</b>	Wednesday, July 08 <sup>th</sup> 2020
<b>Closure:</b>	Wednesday, July 28 <sup>th</sup> 2021, 17:00 CEST; or at an earlier date, in case the budget that is reserved for open calls in SmartAgriHubs (i.e. for this and other SAH open calls) is completely allocated. If other open calls, with similar or deviating conditions, will be published by SmartAgriHubs, potential proposers can find related information on the SmartAgriHubs website.
<b>Selection of Proposals:</b>	Proposals can be submitted for evaluation until closure of the open call and will be evaluated in batches at regular points in time. Dates and time for the evaluation of batches of submitted proposals will be communicated via the SmartAgriHubs website.
<b>Implementation:</b>	The work shall be implemented until July 2022 or before, for being able to take effect. Other implementation schedules might be considered for funding but would require a detailed explanation and need to add value.

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## 5.2 EXPAND Open Call Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation in the SmartAgriHubs EXPAND the NETWORK open call will be organised as single stage evaluation with the involvement of three experts evaluating the submitted proposal. The content of each proposal will be evaluated against the following weighted criteria.

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<b>Impact of Digital Innovation</b>	<b>40%</b>
Offered DIH service portfolio and service delivery scheme	5%
Approach for validation and knowledge exchange of DIH & CC support, enabling replicability of results for further network expansion	15%
Digital innovation strategy to create impact, enabling IEs to reuse available digital resources	15%
Additional funding (to be) attracted	5%
<b>Network Expansion</b>	<b>35%</b>
Number of DIHs, CCs, IEs and regions	10%
Stakeholder involvement, focusing on end-users and specifically farmers	15%
Collaboration cross-border/ cross-region and with the overall SmartAgriHubs project partners and activities	10%
<b>Project Realisation</b>	<b>25%</b>
Excellence of the team	15%
Quality of project plan and budget	10%

Each proposal will be evaluated against the abovementioned criteria by three different evaluators. All proposers will receive the numerical score<sup>17</sup> of their evaluation, and a short narrative explanation of the decision. Decisions of the committee will be delivered “as-is” and are not subject to further discussions.

Selected applicants will be requested to present a detailed plan with respect to deliverables, milestones and associated costs. If needed both parties will enter negotiations to agree upon mutually acceptable plan. In case the negotiations are not concluded in a short period of time (i.e. max 2 weeks) the proposal will be not considered eligible.

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<sup>17</sup> The evaluation will use the evaluation criteria presented above and 6 scores from 0 to 5 as detailed in chapter 3 of the SmartAgriHubs Open Call programme document. In order to be considered for funding, all scores (on a scale from 0 to 5) must be above a threshold of 2 for each criterion, and the total score must be above an overall threshold of 4.

### 5.3 EXPAND Open Call - Reimbursement and Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement:

Every proposal needs to detail the individual budget plan. Generally SmartAgriHubs will ask the consortia during the contracting phase and before Sub-Grant Agreement signature, to detail the allocation of resources, timetable, milestones and deliverables based upon a pre-defined template that will be an Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement. Key elements of the requested information that will be part of Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement can be found below. At least the information in these tables shall be provided together with the proposal. Proposers need to decide, if additional details are required for being able to evaluate the proposal accordingly.

Budget Category	Amount for DIH Support	Costs/Effort covered by third parties	Total
1. Personnel costs			
2. Costs for realising an IE, if DIH can prove its role in the acquisition of the IE (max. 5% of the supporting funding requested from SAH)		-/-	
3. Other direct costs ( <i>travel, equipment, software, services, etc.</i> )			
4. Total direct costs ( <i>Sum of row 1, 2 &amp; 3</i> )			
5. Indirect costs ( <i>25% of Total direct costs</i> )			
6. Total costs ( <i>Sum of row 3 and 4</i> )			
7. Funding requested (max. 20% of the total budgete required for the overall implementation of activities)		-/-	

No <sup>18</sup>	Deliverable Name/Description <sup>19</sup>	Type <sup>20</sup>	Estimated Costs in Euro	Delivery Date <sup>21</sup>
1				M# #

<sup>18</sup> Deliverable numbers in order of delivery dates.

<sup>19</sup> Give a meaningful name, followed by a concise description.

<sup>20</sup> Use one of the following codes:

R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

<sup>21</sup> Measured in months from the project start date.

No 18	Deliverable Name/Description <sup>19</sup>	Type <sup>20</sup>	Estimated Costs in Euro	Delivery Date <sup>21</sup>
2				

No 22	Milestones	Means of verification <sup>23</sup>	Delivery Date
1			M# #
2	...		

Depending on the nature of results and envisaged milestones, SmartAgriHubs considers providing an advance payment of 20% from the requested eligible max. funding. The remaining 80% would be reimbursed upon delivery of deliverables and accomplishment of milestones as contractually agreed.

## 5.4 EXPAND Open Call Proposal Template

To submit a proposal for the EXPAND the NETWORK Open Call, you need to prepare a description in English language that shall be submitted via the proposal management system. You can ask open call related questions by using the SmartAgriHubs forum (<https://forum.smartagrihubs.eu/>). A dedicated open call category is used for this purpose.

### 5.4.1 Format

Please prepare your proposal text as a pdf file, including the following content

Chapter	Content	Pages
Proposed Project/Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acronym, title and abstract</li> <li>Partnership – Coordinator and overall consortium</li> <li>Signed letters of intent (LOI) of consortium members</li> </ul>	0.5 pages, plus admin. data of all parties. One LOI per member
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explanation of the overall idea of the proposal</li> </ul>	1-2 pages
DIH Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explaining the overall idea of the proposal and strategy of the involved DIH(s)</li> <li>Digital innovation strategy to create impact, enabling IEs to reuse available digital resources</li> <li>Highlighting regional but also cross-regional and international collaboration strategies.</li> <li>Relevance to regional, national and international objectives and strategies.</li> <li>Approach to facilitate end-user and specifically farmer involvement</li> </ul>	2-4 pages

<sup>22</sup> Milestone numbers in order of delivery dates.

<sup>23</sup> Show how you will confirm that the milestone has been attained. Refer to indicators if appropriate.

Chapter	Content	Pages
DIH Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explaining the offered services and delivery scheme for supporting the realisation of IEs</li> <li>Copy of the overview generated by the performed DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment</li> </ul>	1-2 page per DIH plus DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment results
Replication of Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy to create a sustainable impact</li> <li>Approach for validation and knowledge exchange of DIH &amp; CC support, enabling replicability of results for further network expansion (including number of DIHs, CCs, IEs and regions involved)</li> </ul>	2-3 pages
IEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenting the specific IEs with related partnership that shall be supported and stakeholders that will be involved.</li> <li>If IEs are not yet identified, a clear time plan to elicit IEs and related activities need to be presented to allow earlier termination of the contract in case of not favourable achievement of proposed results.</li> </ul>	ca. 3-5 pages for each IE in case IEs are not yet identified, some 2-3 pages with timing, activities and decision points
Funding Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explaining the assignment of the requested funding</li> <li>Outlining the mobilisation of additional funding</li> </ul>	1-2 pages
Project Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timing of activities, milestones and related deliverables</li> <li>Budget planning</li> </ul>	2-3 pages
Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of partner organisation with website link</li> <li>Short description of the team, explaining the team strengths, including CVs of individual team members</li> </ul>	0.5-1 page per partner
Declarations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declaration for proposal submission signed by every proposer requesting funding from SmartAgriHubs</li> <li>SME Self-Declaration (only for SME type of organisations member of the proposal)</li> </ul>	0.5-1 page per proposer
Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tables summarising the budget, milestones and deliverables</li> </ul>	2-3 pages

It is up to you to decide on the most appropriate format for presenting your proposal: plain text, tables and/or graphical presentation. We recommend to add an optional one page with a figure, presenting your proposal graphically with timing, innovation experiments with addressed digital innovations, mobilised additional funds and expected results.

With the submission of the proposal, the proposers are accepting that future sub-grant agreements will annex the SmartAgriHubs General Conditions as part of the contract. Further information about the General Conditions as well as about the Sub-grant Agreement and related annexes is presented in the Open Call Programme Document.

Any subsequent individual communication via email shall use the following subject:

- “SmartAgriHubs Proposal Submission – EXPAND the NETWORK Open Call – [Acronym of your proposal]”

## 5.5 EXPAND Open Calls Declarations

### 5.5.1 Declaration for Proposal Submission

My organisation [*legal name*] declares the following:

- My Organisation will NOT accept any funding or financing aid of more than two sub-grants from SmartAgriHubs in the scope of the SAH open calls.
- My Organisation will NOT request more than EUR 100,000 in total in one or more proposals selected by SmartAgriHubs.
- In case my Organisation is accepted for funding by SmartAgriHubs, we will provide the legal entity form<sup>24</sup> to SmartAgriHubs.

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Place & Date

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Full name in block letters and signature of legal representative

### 5.5.2 SME Self-Declaration

My organisation [*legal name*] is an SME meaning “micro, small and medium sized enterprise” within the meaning of Recommendation 2003/361/EC in the version of 6 May 2003<sup>25</sup>, declaring the following<sup>26</sup>:

- employs fewer than 250 persons
- has an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or
- an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million
- is autonomous and
- is an SME with the meaning of Recommendation 2003/361/EC, also taking into account partner or linked enterprises

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Place & Date

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Full name in block letters and signature of legal representative

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<sup>24</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legEnt\\_privComp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legEnt_privComp_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/sme\\_definition/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm)

<sup>26</sup> Please tick every box that applies.

## 6 Annex 1 – General Evaluation Criteria

The SmartAgriHubs Open Calls are based on general evaluation criteria that were elaborated in general for being applicable to the different open calls that are organised during the runtime of the SmartAgriHubs project.

### 6.1 Evaluation of DIH’s Proposals for Supporting IEs

Proposals are evaluated by experts who provide their quantitative evaluation for each criterion as presented in the following Table 11 as well as providing a summarising qualitative assessment for each of the criteria groups. The evaluation criteria are further detailed in the following sections 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

Table 11: SmartAgriHubs evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
<b>Impact of Digital Innovation</b>	<b>40%</b>
Offered DIH service portfolio and service delivery scheme	5%
Approach for validation and knowledge exchange of DIH & CC support, enabling replicability of results for further network expansion	15%
Digital innovation strategy to create impact, enabling IEs to reuse available digital resources	15%
Additional funding(to be) attracted	5%
<b>Network Expansion</b>	<b>35%</b>
Number of DIHs, CCs, IEs and regions	10%
End-user and specifically farmer involvement	15%
Collaboration cross-border/ cross-region and with the overall SmartAgriHubs project partners and activities	10%
<b>Project Realisation</b>	<b>25%</b>
Excellence of the team & stakeholder involvement	15%
Quality of project plan and budget	10%

#### 6.1.1 Impact of Digital Innovation

- Offered DIH service portfolio and service delivery scheme
  - The proposal shall explain which services are offered and provided by the involved DIHs. This shall include an explanation of the planned maturity of the innovation services as well as describing conditions to access the services.
  - Involved DIHs are expected to make a self-assessment and join the related peer review procedure as developed by the SmartAgriHubs project. Proposals shall outline their plans about timing and how to use subsequent advancement plans.
- Approach for validation and knowledge exchange of DIH & CC support, enabling replicability of results for further network expansion
  - Proposals shall explain the approach to validate the service delivery of DIH and CCs. At the same time a strong focus shall be on the experience and knowledge exchange between DIH in similar and different regions. A similar validation and advancement scheme shall be presented for the usage of CC support.
  - The IEs shall be the key element for validating the support. Therefore, it shall be made evident that a proposed project is also targeting at a full life-cycle of an IE from

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an initial ideation phase towards the technology deployment and testing phase in a real operative setting.

- The IE should foresee and describe one or more reusable assets of either technological or business nature that will be provided to the SmartAgriHubs repository of reusable assets.
- Digital innovation strategy to create impact, enabling IEs to reuse available digital resources
  - It is expected that the proposed projects are embedded in a medium- to long-term strategy for digital innovation in specific regions. Such a strategy can focus on regional development strategies and on specific topics related to ecosystems, technologies or business.
  - This shall also evaluate the plans of the involved DIH(s) to continue the activities after the end of funding by SmartAgriHubs as well as beyond the end of the SmartAgriHubs overall project.
  - The proposing DIH(s) needs to outline the planned or available approach for offering technical support and provide related technology infrastructures. If this is not part of the planned DIH service portfolio, it needs to be outlined how to assure related support measures. At the same time, the proposal needs to explain the strategy facilitating the reuse of digital resources.
  - The proposals shall also outline potential contributions to the UN SDGs, explaining expected advances towards a circular economy and if they are increasing the food system's resilience.
- Additional funding (to be) attracted
  - The proposal needs to explain the approach for attracting additional funding that could be provided as own investment of related legal entities as well as attracting additional private or public funding.
  - The overall approach and strategic objectives need to explain the envisaged purpose of the additional funding as well as the conditions on which they will be funded in addition to the SmartAgriHubs funds.

### 6.1.2 Network Expansion

- Number of DIHs, CCs, IEs and regions
  - The organisations submitting a proposal and other stakeholders already committed (e.g. signing a letter of intent) or planned to join shall be presented.
  - This shall be done for the direct partners expected to join. Also, other third parties shall be presented that will play a direct or indirect role in the realisation of the proposed project.
  - This shall also include the identification of strategic events that will assemble relevant stakeholders as well as online communication channels expected to be established.
- End-user and specifically farmer involvement
  - It is expected that IEs will be mainly driven by the related end-users and are applying a multi-actor approach to increase the quality of results and likelihood of adoption.
  - The proposal shall contain a well-defined plan to attract end-users and estimate the envisaged number of end-users/farmers as well as identify effort required to accomplish the IE.
  - The proposal shall identify the number of SMEs, startups and micro enterprises that will benefit from the proposed action.
- Cross-border and cross-region collaboration



- Proposals shall outline any cross-border or cross-region collaboration, while highlighting the envisaged added-value that could be achieved in terms of experience exchange as well as validating approaches or technology adoption in different regional settings.

### 6.1.3 Project Realisation

- Excellence of the team & stakeholder involvement
  - The expertise of the team shall be presented. This shall identify the individual expertise and outline the ability of the organisation to provide and validate services provided by DIHs and CCs to IEs.
  - Proposals shall also outline the larger stakeholder audience that will be involved in the realisation of the project. Especially their commitment shall be explained and made tangible by providing letter of support.
- Quality of project plan and budget
  - Proposals need to plan their efforts and budget. This shall foresee appropriate resources in accordance to the planned tasks and the capacities offered by the involved organisations.
  - The milestones, deliverables and timing of work need to be properly aligned to assure a successful implementation of the proposed activities.
  - The proposal shall also analyse potential risks and identify related contingency plans.

## 6.2 Evaluation of Proposals for Hackathon type of Activities

Proposals are evaluated by experts who provide their quantitative evaluation for each criterion as presented in the following Table 12 as well as providing a summarising overall assessment. The evaluation criteria are further detailed in the following sections 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

Table 12: SmartAgriHubs evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
<b>Impact of Proposed Activity</b>	<b>50%</b>
Relevance of the digital innovation related topics for the stakeholders and citizens	30%
Involvement of solution providers, end-users and reuse of results by stakeholders	20%
<b>Activity Realisation</b>	<b>50%</b>
Support offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders	15%
Excellence of the team	25%
Quality of project plan and budget	10%

### 6.2.1 Impact of Proposed Activity

- Relevance of the digital innovation related topics for the stakeholders and citizens
  - The activity shall aim at the mobilisation of talent and enable the realisation of digital innovations that are addressing current opportunities and threats, having an impact on the society and specifically benefit citizens directly or indirectly.

- Activities that are addressing opportunities and threats with respect to the CORONA COVID-19 pandemic, the Green Deal or specific SDGs (i.e. Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations) in relation to the agri-food chain are examples that could create an excellent impact.
- Involvement of solution providers, end-users and reuse of results by stakeholders
  - It is expected that the activity will be mainly driven by needs of related end-users to increase the quality and impact of results as well as likelihood of adoption.
  - The proposal shall contain a well-defined plan/approach to attract solution providers and end-users.
  - The proposal shall explain the approach to facilitate reuse of results by stakeholders.

### 6.2.2 Activity Realisation

- Support offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders
  - The proposal shall explain which support is offered and provided by the involved DIHs and other stakeholders.
  - The proposal shall explain the current maturity of the planned support.
- Excellence of the team
  - The expertise of the team shall be presented. This shall identify the individual expertise and outline the ability of the organisation to realise the action.
  - Proposals shall also outline the existing relations to the larger stakeholder audience that will be involved in the realisation of the activity. Especially their commitment shall be explained.
- Quality of project plan and budget
  - Proposals need to plan their efforts and budget. This shall foresee appropriate resources in accordance to the planned tasks and the capacities offered by the involved organisations.
  - The milestones, deliverables and timing of work need to be explained.

### 6.2.3 Deviating Evaluation Criteria

The realisation of deviating hackathon type of activities in additional sub-calls might also ask for deviating evaluation criteria. However, as soon as an open call/sub-call is published, also the related evaluation criteria will be referenced and communicated.

## 6.3 Scores and Thresholds

### 6.3.1 Scores

External experts score each evaluation criterion on a scale from 0 to 5 (half point scores may be given):

- 0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 – Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

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- 3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- 4 – Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
- 5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The maximum overall score of individual ratings is thus 45 (9x5) for proposals of DIH supporting IEs and 25 (5x5) for proposals for hackathon type of activities. However, due to the weighting, the evaluation will result in a maximum weighted/normalised score of 5.

All proposers will receive the numerical score of their evaluation. Decisions of the evaluation committee will be delivered “as-is” and are not subject to further discussions.

### 6.3.2 Threshold

In order to be considered for funding, your proposal must score above a threshold for each criterion, and above an overall threshold. The following thresholds apply:

- Threshold for each criterion: 2
- Overall weighted threshold: 4

## 7 Annex 2 – General Proposal Template

General proposal templates were developed as input for the preparation of open calls. They are serving as reference to design specific proposal templates that are published in combination with the individual open calls.

These were the baseline to develop the proposal templates for the REPEND, RESTART and EXPAND open calls.

### 7.1 Proposal Template for Supporting IE Realisation

This section 7.1 is listing the main topics proposals for the support of realising IEs shall include.

*Table 13: Contents of DIH's Proposals for Supporting IEs.*

Chapter	Content	Pages
Proposed Project/ Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acronym, title and abstract</li> <li>• Partnership – Coordinator and overall consortium</li> <li>• Signed letters of intent (LOI) of consortium members</li> </ul>	0,5 pages, plus admin. data of all parties. One LOI per member
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of the overall idea of the proposal</li> </ul>	1-2 pages
DIH Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining the overall idea of the proposal and strategy of the involved DIH(s)</li> <li>• Highlighting regional but also cross-regional and international collaboration strategies.</li> <li>• Relevance to regional, national and international objectives and strategies.</li> </ul>	2-4 pages
DIH Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining the offered services for supporting the realisation of IEs</li> </ul>	1-2 page
Replication of Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy to create a sustainable impact</li> </ul>	2-3 pages
IEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting specific IEs with related partnership that shall be supported and stakeholders that will be involved.</li> <li>• If IEs are not yet identified, a clear time plan to elicit IEs and related activities need to be presented to allow earlier termination of the contract in case of not favourable achievement of proposed results.</li> </ul>	ca. 3-5 pages for each IE in case IEs are not yet identified, some 2-3 pages with timing, activities and decision points
Funding Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining the assignment of the requested funding</li> <li>• Outlining the mobilisation of additional funding</li> </ul>	1-2 pages
Project Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing of activities, milestones and related deliverables</li> <li>• Budget planning</li> </ul>	2-3 pages
Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of partner organisation with website link</li> <li>• Short CVs of individuals</li> </ul>	0,5-1 page per partner
Declarations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declaration concerning unique proposal submission</li> <li>• SME declaration</li> </ul>	Signed forms by the coordinator

## 7.2 Proposal Template for Hackathon type of Activities

To submit a proposal for Hackathon type of Activities, you need to prepare a short description in English language that shall be sent by email as a pdf file.

Please use the following subject: “SmartAgriHubs Proposal Submission – [Call-ID] – [Acronym of your proposal]” and submit your complete proposal before [Month] [Day], [Year].

### Format

Please prepare your proposal text as a pdf file, no longer than 4 pages plus a title page. We recommend to add an optional one page with a figure, presenting your proposal graphically with timing, main activities and expected results. Therefore, the proposal shall not exceed 6 pages in total. The pdf file must not be larger than 2 MB.

### Title Page

Please include the following information in the title page:

- Title of the call topic: “SmartAgriHubs Hackathons and Challenges”
- Title and Acronym of your proposal
- Name and webpage of your organisation
- Name, email, telephone number, and address of the contact person
- Date of preparation and version number

### Content of Your Proposal

The body of your proposal shall include the following parts and must not exceed 4 pages (plus one optional extra page for a figure):

- Short description/abstract of your idea, clearly outlining the key elements. It shall not exceed some 150-200 words.
- Relevance of the digital innovation related topics for the stakeholders and citizens
- Involvement of solution providers and end-users
- Reuse of results by stakeholders
- Timing of activities, milestones and related deliverables
- Budget planning
- Description of partner organisations with website link
- Short CVs of key individuals
- Declaration concerning unique proposal submission
- SME declaration

It is up to you to decide on the most appropriate format for presenting your proposal: plain text, tables and/or graphical presentation. We recommend to add an optional one page with a figure, presenting your proposal graphically with timing, main activities and expected results.

## 8 Annex 3 – Involvement of external Experts for Proposal Evaluation

### 8.1 Independent evaluation experts: Conflict of interest

#### 8.1.1 The Principle

When selecting independent experts, the evaluation organisers have to ensure that the expert does not have any conflict of interest in relation to the proposal on which they are required to give an opinion.

The expert must perform their work impartially. To this end, the expert is required to:

- Confirm there is no conflict of interest for the evaluation s/he is carrying out by signing a declaration prior to the start of the work.
- Inform SmartAgriHubs of any conflicts of interest arising in the course of their work,

In general, a conflict of interest exists, if an expert has any vested interests in relation to the proposals upon which s/he is asked to give advice, or the expert and/or their organisation stands to benefit directly or indirectly, or be disadvantaged, as a direct result of the work carried out, or is in any other situation that compromises their ability to carry out their work impartially.

The contracting party will decide whether a conflict of interest exists, taking account of the circumstances, available information and related risks when an expert is in any situation that could cast doubt on their ability to carry out their work, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party.

If an expert knowingly conceals a conflict of interest, and is discovered during the evaluation, the expert will be immediately excluded, and (part of) the evaluation needs to be redone.

A disqualifying conflict of interest exists if an expert:

- Was involved in the preparation of the proposal
- Stands to benefit directly should the proposal be accepted
- Has a close family relationship with any person representing an applicant organisation in the proposal
- Is an investor, director, trustee or partner of an applicant organisation
- Is employed by one of the applicant organisations in a proposal
- Is in any other situation that compromises his or her ability to evaluate the proposal impartially.

A potential conflict of interest may exist, even in cases not covered by the clear disqualifying conflicts indicated above, if an expert:

- Was employed by one of the applicant organisations in a proposal within the previous three years
- Is involved in a contract or collaboration with an applicant organisation, or had been so in the previous three years
- Is in any other situation that could cast doubt on his or her ability to evaluate the proposal impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party.

Experts with a disqualifying conflict of interest may not participate in the evaluation at all.

### 8.1.2 Identification, Monitoring and Reporting

The evaluation organisers shall brief the experts in writing or verbally on need to exclude a conflict of interest prior to their engagement. The briefing shall be documented.

The evaluation organiser provides experts with a contact to report conflicts of interests as soon as they arise, upon which the evaluation organiser takes action without delay. Overall, the evaluation organiser shall monitor potential conflict of interest and document all issues arising.

As part of the evaluation report provided to the Commission, the evaluation organiser shall include a section reporting how conflicts of interest have been handled and any specific issues which arose prior and during the evaluation.

## 8.2 Declaration to Sign by Experts

I undertake to abide by the code of conduct for independent experts acting as evaluators covered in Annex (Code of conduct).

I undertake to inform the evaluation organiser immediately if I discover any disqualifying or potential conflict of interest with any proposal that I am asked to evaluate or which is the subject of discussion in any evaluation meeting in which I participate (Declaration of no conflict of interest).

Please check one of the two boxes below

- In particular, I declare that I have not submitted, nor am I, to my knowledge involved in any proposal currently under evaluation or submitted for evaluation, under the SmartAgriHubs Open Call for Proposals.
- In particular, I declare that my participation in the evaluation of the following proposal(s) could create a conflict of interest:

\_\_\_\_\_

I undertake not to reveal any detail of the evaluation process and its outcomes or of any proposal submitted for evaluation without the express written approval of the evaluation organiser. In case of evaluations carried out outside evaluation organisers controlled premises, I understand that I will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent and for returning, erasing or destroying all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation, unless otherwise instructed

For acceptance:

Name:

Signature:

Place, Date:

## 8.3 Annex to the Declaration to be Signed by Evaluators

### ANNEX Specific Conditions

#### Code of Conduct for Independent Experts Appointed as Evaluators

1. The task of an expert is to participate in a confidential, fair and equitable evaluation of each proposal according to the procedures described in this guide and in any programme-specific evaluation document. He/she must use his/her best endeavours to achieve this, follow any instructions given by the Commission to this end and deliver a constant and high quality of work.
2. The expert works as an independent person. He/she is deemed to work in a personal capacity and, in performing the work, does not represent any organisation.
3. The expert must sign a Declaration of no conflict of interest and confidentiality before starting the work, by which he/she accepts the present Code of Conduct. Invited experts who do not sign the declaration will not be allowed to work as an expert.
4. In doing so, the expert commits him/herself to strict confidentiality and impartiality concerning his/her tasks.
5. If an expert has a conflict of interest with a proposal, he/she must declare such facts to the responsible contact person designated by the evaluation organisers as soon as he/she becomes aware of this.
6. Experts may not discuss any proposal with others, including other experts or personnel of the evaluation organisers not directly involved in the evaluation of the proposal, except during the formal discussion at the meetings moderated by or with the knowledge and agreement of the responsible contact person from the evaluation organiser.
7. Experts may not communicate with applicants. No proposal may be amended during the evaluation session. Experts' advice to the evaluation organisers on any proposal may not be communicated by them to the applicants or to any other person.
8. Experts are not allowed to disclose the names of other experts participating in the evaluation.
9. Where it has been decided that proposals are to be posted or made available electronically to experts, who then work from their own or other suitable premises, the expert will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent and returning, erasing or destroying all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation as instructed. In such instances, experts may seek further information (for example through the internet, specialised databases, etc.) in order to allow them to complete their examination of the proposals, provided that the obtaining of such information respects the overall rules for confidentiality and impartiality. Experts may not show the contents of proposals or information on applicants to third parties (e.g. colleagues, students, etc.) without the express written approval of the evaluation organiser. It is strictly forbidden for experts to make contact with applicants.
10. Where the evaluation takes place in an office or building controlled by the evaluation organiser, experts are not allowed to take outside the evaluation building any parts of proposals, copies or notes, either on paper or in electronic form, relating to the evaluation of proposals. Experts may be given the possibility of seeking further information (for example through the internet, specialised databases, etc.) to allow them to complete their examination of the proposals, but they may not contact third parties without the express consent of the evaluation organiser staff supervising the evaluation.
11. Experts are required at all times to comply strictly with any rules defined by the evaluation organisers for ensuring the confidentiality of the evaluation process and its outcomes. Failure to comply with these rules may result in exclusion from the immediate and future evaluation processes.