# SmartAgriHubs Open Call Definition

# EXPAND the SmartAgriHubs Community Network

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| **Author** | SmartAgriHubs WP2 |
| **Date** | 26 May 2021 |
| **Version** | Final – Update May 2021 |
| **Topic** | Open Call for Digital Innovation Hubs that are supporting the realisation of Innovation Experiments, mobilising the related stakeholders and facilitating the access to Competence Centre related services |

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). 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".

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| **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. |
| **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)[1] in accordance to their definition in the SmartAgriHubs open call programme document. Eligible costs of DIHs can be funded by 70 or 100%. |
| | 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[2], providing the self-assessment results as part of the proposal. |
| **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. |
| **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 (i.e. eligible costs of DIHs can be funded by 70 or 100%), where the 80% of effort, budget, investment or in-kind contribution should be mobilised by additional public or private/own 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. |
| | 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. |
| **Funding Rates:** | Eligible costs (i.e. in relation to the 20% funded by SmartAgriHubs) 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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[1] *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*

[2] *Using the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Services Maturity Model self-assessment, available in the SmartAgriHubs portal via the "Tools" page (https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/tools). Use the link to the "Maturity Self Assessment".*

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| **Reimbursement:** | 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). |
| **Evaluation Criteria:** | Proposals will be evaluated with respect to:<br>• Impact of Digital Innovation (weighting of 40%)<br>• Network Expansion (weighting of 35%)<br>• Project Realisation (weighting of 25%) |
| **Opening:** | Wednesday, July 08th 2020 |
| **Closure:** | Wednesday, June 29th 2022, 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. |
| **Selection of Proposals:** | 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. |
| **Implementation:** | The work shall be implemented until October 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. |

## 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.

| Evaluation Criteria | Weight |
|---|---|
| **Impact of Digital Innovation** | **40%** |
| 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% |
| **Network Expansion** | **35%** |
| 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% |
| **Project Realisation** | **25%** |
| 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[3] 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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[3]  *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.*

## 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 *(travel, equipment, software, services, etc.)* | | | |
| 4. Total direct costs *(Sum of row 1, 2 & 3)* | | | |
| 5. Indirect costs *(25% of Total direct costs)* | | | |
| 6. Total costs *(Sum of row 3 and 4)* | | | |
| 7. Funding requested (max. 20% of the total budget required for the overall implementation of activities) | | **-/-** | |

| No[4] | Deliverable Name/Description[5] | Type[6] | Estimated Costs in Euro | Delivery Date[7] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | M## |
| 2 | | | | |
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[4]   *Deliverable numbers in order of delivery dates.*

[5]   *Give a meaningful name, followed by a concise description.*

[6]   *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.*

[7]   *Measured in months from the project start date.*

| No[8] | Milestones | Means of verification[9] | 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.

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[8]   *Milestone numbers in order of delivery dates.*

[9]   *Show how you will confirm that the milestone has been attained. Refer to indicators if appropriate.*

# Template for EXPAND the NETWORK Proposals

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.

## Format

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

| Chapter | Content | Pages |
|---|---|---|
| Proposed Project/ Activity | • Acronym, title and abstract<br>• Partnership – Coordinator and overall consortium<br>• Signed letters of intent (LOI) of consortium members | 0.5 pages, plus admin. data of all parties. One LOI per member |
| Outline | • Explanation of the overall idea of the proposal | 1-2 pages |
| DIH Strategy | • Explaining the overall idea of the proposal and strategy of the involved DIH(s)<br>• Digital innovation strategy to create impact, enabling IEs to reuse available digital resources<br>• Highlighting regional but also cross-regional and international collaboration strategies.<br>• Relevance to regional, national and international objectives and strategies.<br>• Approach to facilitate end-user and specifically farmer involvement | 2-4 pages |
| DIH Services | • Explaining the offered services and delivery scheme for supporting the realisation of IEs<br>• Copy of the overview generated by the performed DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment | 1-2 page per DIH plus DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment results |
| Replication of Results | • Strategy to create a sustainable impact<br>• Approach for validation and knowledge exchange of DIH & CC support, enabling replicability of results for further network expansion (including number of DIHs, CCs, IEs and regions involved) | 2-3 pages |
| IEs | • Presenting the specific IEs with related partnership that shall be supported and stakeholders that will be involved.<br>• 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. | ca. 3-5 pages for each IE<br>in case IEs are not yet identified, some 2-3 pages with timing, activities and decision points |
| Funding Scheme | • Explaining the assignment of the requested funding<br>• Outlining the mobilisation of additional funding | 1-2 pages |
| Project Plan | • Timing of activities, milestones and related deliverables<br>• Budget planning | 2-3 pages |
| Consortium | • Description of partner organisation with website link<br>• Short description of the team, explaining the team strengths, including CVs of individual team members | 0.5-1 page per partner |

| Chapter | Content | Pages |
|---------|---------|-------|
| Declarations | • Declaration for proposal submission signed by every proposer requesting funding from SmartAgriHubs<br>• SME Self-Declaration (only for SME type of organisations member of the proposal) | 0.5-1 page per proposer |
| Annex | • Tables summarising the budget, milestones and deliverables | 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]"

# Declarations to Sign

## 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[10] to SmartAgriHubs.

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Place & Date                    Full name in block letters and signature of legal representative

## 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[11], declaring the following[12]:

☐ 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                    Full name in block letters and signature of legal representative

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[10] http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legEnt_privComp_en.pdf

[11] http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm

[12] *Please tick every box that applies.*