



SmartAgriHubs Open Call Definition

PREPARE Innovation Experiments for Digital Transformation with Teams in the Agri-Food Economy

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Topic	Open call for Digital Innovation Hubs that are supporting organisations in the planning and definition of Innovation Experiments for digital transformation in the Agri-food economy.

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 "**PREPARE**".

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" that serves as complementary guideline to this open call definition. You can download the most recent documents via the open call page via the SmartAgriHubs website (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/open-call>).

However, the specific terms set out in this PREPARE Open Call document takes precedence over those in the open call programme document.

Further information is available in the SmartAgriHubs portal and specifically in the SmartAgriHubs forum, offering potential proposers the possibility to ask individual questions concerning the open call (please use the "Open Call Category": <https://forum.smartagrihubs.eu/c/open-call/35>)¹.

Call Topic: Open call for Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) that are supporting teams in the planning and definition of Innovation Experiments for digital transformation in the Agri-food economy.

DIHs can propose activities and services that support companies and/or organisations in the definition and planning of so called "Innovation Experiments".

Expected Results: A specific objective of this PREPARE open call is to prepare a proposal for an Innovation Experiment that can be submitted in the EXPAND open call. Because these IE proposals are not necessarily to be submitted in the EXPAND call, the more general objective is to plan and prepare the realisation of one or more Innovation Experiments. Therefore, if selected for funding under PREPARE, the DIH's proposed activities and services shall result in the following results and contents of deliverables:

- Compilation of an appropriate team, able and committed to realise the Innovation Experiment from an end-user, business, technological and extended stakeholder perspective.
- Analysis of the technology readiness level of the envisaged innovation, the technical and economic feasibility and its relevance for the supported team to have an impact that could be realised in the scope of an Innovation Experiment.
- A budget planning for realising the Innovation Experiment(s). DIHs shall also include the financial plan, detailing the path to facilitate access to additional private investors and/or regional, national, European funding schemes provided by third parties.
- A project plan consisting in one or more Innovation Experiments, explaining the timing of activities, milestones and deliverables. This could also be materialised in the form of a project proposal to be later on submitted to a relevant open call to further support the realisation of the aforementioned Innovation Experiment(s) (e.g. by the SmartAgriHubs EXPAND open call).
- Signed letter of intent by the main participants in an Innovation Experiment, stating their role and envisaged effort and in-kind contribution to be committed.

¹ For being able to fully use the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal as well as to read and post in the SmartAgriHubs Forum, you need to register and create a user account. However, getting started with the Innovation Portal is easy. After a short and free of costs registration procedure, you can directly start exploring and using the Portal and its many functions.
<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/docs/getting-started/getting-started-user>

These results should serve as preparation for one or more subsequent proposals to the SmartAgriHubs EXPAND open call, other initiatives organising open calls and/or potential investors that offer funding for:

- DIH(s) that are supporting the realisation of Innovation Experiments and/or
- Organisation(s) or consortia that are realising an Innovation Experiment.

Teams need to submit at project end the following information that could be published by SmartAgriHubs:

- Short description of the elaborated Innovation Experiment.
- Description of the team/consortium that was supported by the DIH.
- Expected parties, infrastructure and places that would be involved in the developed Innovation Experiment.
- Value proposition.
- ICT challenges/ opportunities addressed.
- Potential software and hardware components intended to use.

Teams could also indicate if there is information that shall not be published immediately to avoid disadvantages in planned submission of Innovation Experiment proposals. However, latest 6 months after completion of the work funded by SmartAgriHubs, SmartAgriHubs shall be enabled to publish these results.

Therefore, proposals need to include a plan for publishing the elaborated results via the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal.

The envisaged Innovation Experiments shall dedicate a significant amount of effort/investment to the involvement of small, medium and micro-enterprises.

Potential Proposers: Activities shall be proposed by one or several Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH)² in accordance to the definition in the SmartAgriHubs open call programme document. Proposers need to be a legal entity.

An individual DIH must not receive funding from more than one proposal selected for funding in the scope of the PREPARE open call.

A DIH can receive funding in the scope of a PREPARE related project (i.e. sub-grant), independent of their previous or future participation in other SmartAgriHubs open calls for third parties (e.g. RESPOND, RESTART or EXPAND). Therefore, when counting the DIH involvement including the PREPARE, RESPOND, RESTART and EXPAND open call, DIHs could receive funding in maximum of three different sub-grants funded by SmartAgriHubs.

DIHs participating in a proposed project, must register in the SmartAgriHubs portal before submitting a proposal (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/network>).

Available Funding: SmartAgriHubs considers that proposals requesting a contribution of max. 20,000 Euro would allow to support the preparation of one or more Innovation Experiments appropriately.

Currently, SmartAgriHubs considers a total amount of max. EUR 1,200,000 Euro funding for the overall PREPARE open call as appropriate to support the preparation of Innovation Experiments for Digital Transformation in the Agri-Food Economy.

² *Proposing DIHs must register in the SmartAgriHubs portal before submitting a proposal (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/network>). It is not required to undergo a specific external certification procedure at proposal stage*

Reimbursement:	<p>SmartAgriHubs will reimburse on a lump sum basis, requesting deliverables, as detailed above for the expected results. The first deliverable is on the conceptualisation, when delivered and accepted 25% of the lumpsum will be paid. This deliverable includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation of an appropriate team • Analysis of the technology readiness level <p>The second and final deliverable is the complete IE description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget planning for realising the Innovation Experiment(s) • Project plan consisting in one or more Innovation Experiments • Signed letter of intent by the main participants in an Innovation Experiment <p>After acceptance of the second deliverable the remaining 75% will be paid.</p>
Evaluation Criteria:	<p>Proposals will be evaluated with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of the support/services offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders • Excellence of the strategic approach to achieve impact in the region • Complementarity of the supported organisations and involvement of SMEs • Excellence of the DIH team • Quality of project plan
Examples for Innovation Experiments and DIH support:	<p>One or more DIHs shall support teams in the preparation of Innovation Experiments. Important objective in the SmartAgriHubs project is to stimulate the use of already achieved results of digital innovation experiments and projects. Replication or use of the experience gained and results of other projects are encouraged. Specific examples for Innovation Experiments are available via the SmartAgriHubs website (https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/flagship-innovation-experiments). But also other good practice of other projects or programs can help to build strong Innovation Experiments. Examples of these are the Use Cases in IoF2020 (www.iof2020.eu) or the Operation Groups on digitization in the EIP-Agri program (https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/node).</p> <p>Further information about DIHs can be accessed via the SmartAgriHubs website (https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/hubs) and support for DIHs is available in the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal (https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/home).</p>
Opening:	Thursday, March 18 th , 2021
Closure:	Wednesday, May 26 th , 2021, 17:00 Brussels Time
Selection of Proposals:	<p>Proposals can be submitted via a proposal submission system before the open call closure date. All eligible proposals will be evaluated after the open call closure. Proposals with a positive evaluation (i.e. reaching an evaluation over thresholds) will be ranked accordingly and invited for contract preparation as long as funding allocated to the PREPARE open call is available.</p>
Implementation:	<p>The work shall be implemented latest until December 2021 or before. Other implementation schedules might be considered for funding but would require a detailed explanation and need to add value.</p>

Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation in the SmartAgriHubs PREPARE 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.

Impact of Proposed Activity	30%
Excellence of the strategic approach to achieve impact in the region	10%
Complementarity of the supported organisations and involvement of SMEs	20%
Activity Realisation	70%
Appropriateness of the support/services offered by the proposing DIH and other stakeholders	30%
Excellence of the DIH team	30%
Quality of project plan	10%

Each proposal will be evaluated against the abovementioned criteria by evaluators. All proposers will receive the numerical score of their evaluation, without narrative explanation of the evaluation.

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 3.

All proposals above threshold will also receive 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.

With the submission of the proposal, proposers are accepting that related 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.

Proposal Template for the SAH PREPARE Open Call

To submit a proposal for preparing one or more Innovation Experiments, 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 – PREPARE Open Call – [Proposal Acronym]"

Content of your Proposal

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

- **Title Page** - please include the following information:
 - Title of the call topic: "SmartAgriHubs PREPARE 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
- **Proposal text** no longer than 2 pages – this shall include the following parts:
 - Short description/abstract of your idea, clearly outlining the key elements. It shall not exceed 100-150 words.
 - Description of the Innovation Experiment(s) to be prepared.
 - Impact of the Innovation Experiment(s) for the stakeholders and the region.
 - Approach to support the potential consortium for defining the Innovation Experiment.
 - Short description of the DIH Organisation.
 - Supported organisation(s) that intend to realise the Innovation Experiment.
- **Optional one extra page with a figure**, presenting your proposal graphically with timing, main activities and expected results.
- **One additional page** with the requested budget, milestones and work steps of your activities to prepare an Innovation Experiment.
- **One page presenting the involved DIH team**, its competencies and roles of individuals for the provision of DIH services.
- **One page per proposer** with the declaration for proposal submission signed by every proposer requesting funding from SmartAgriHubs and if applicable the SME Self-Declaration (only for SME type of organisations requesting funding).

It is up to you to decide on the most appropriate format for presenting your proposal text: plain text, tables and/or graphical presentation. We recommend to add the optional one page with a figure, presenting your proposal graphically with timing, main activities and expected results. Moreover, please add the additional pages as listed above (i.e. on budget, milestones, team, and declarations) to the pdf file. Only the delivered pdf file will be subject for proposal evaluation. Any content provided via links to Internet based sources cannot be considered eligible for evaluation. The pdf file must not be larger than 10 MB.

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 three 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 form³ to SmartAgriHubs.

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 2003⁴, declaring the following⁵:

- 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

Place & Date

Full name in block letters and signature of legal representative

³ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legEnt_privComp_en.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm

⁵ Please tick every box that applies.