



SmartAgriHubs Open Calls

Frequently Asked Questions

Open Calls RESTART & EXPAND

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Topic	<p>Collection of Frequently Asked Questions for the SmartAgriHubs RESTART & EXPAND Open Calls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RESTART: Open call for hackathon type of activities that will contribute to the RESTART of the European Agri-Food Economy with short and medium-term impact to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis.• EXPAND: 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

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Abbreviations

CC	Competence Centre
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
EU	European Union
H2020	Biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020)
IE	Innovation Experiment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
SAH	SmartAgriHubs project (https://www.smartagrihubs.eu)
SME	Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprise

1. General Questions

1.1 What is SmartAgriHubs looking for?

SmartAgriHubs is aiming at an expansion of the current networks of regional Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) and technology focused Competence Centres (CCs). At the same time, such a network expansion shall go hand in hand with the realisation of so-called Innovation Experiments (IEs). Therefore, the SmartAgriHubs open call is calling for proposals that aim at the realisation of programmes that are promoting digital innovation in form of IEs that are directly supported by DIHs and CCs.

Overall, SmartAgriHubs would like to support an additional amount of some 70 IEs taking place in different European regions. At the same time, SmartAgriHubs would like to trigger local initiatives that consider the offered grant as one part of the required budget and intend to mobilise additional funding from diverse sources as appropriate with the specific situation in the related region.

1.2 What is SmartAgriHubs not looking for?

SmartAgriHubs is not searching for technology driven initiatives that would like to focus on validation of a specific technology enabler. Of course, IEs shall also realise digital innovations, but focus rather on the "supported pathway" from end-user needs to a realised digital innovation at an end-user site, than focusing on plain technological development.

1.3 What topics can be addressed?

IEs shall realise digital innovation in the agri-food domain. The proposing DIHs shall offer a reasonable service portfolio for being able to facilitate the realisation of IEs. At the same time, CCs need to be involved as experts for specific topics in relation to the digital innovation.

See also at the SmartAgriHubs website <https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/> for more information about DIHs, CCs and IEs.

1.4 What are the deadlines?

The open calls are open for submissions until July 28th 2021. However, they are using a continuous submission scheme.

This means, there are several dates for proposal evaluation and as soon as a proposal is positively evaluated, you could start your activities.

The first deadline to submit a proposal for evaluation is September 03rd 2020. All proposals submitted until that date will be evaluated in a first batch of proposals. It is expected that successful proposals could start their work 1-2 months after the submission deadline.

1.5 Who can apply?

Legal entities from EU member states or associated countries. Proposals are expected to be led by DIHs. A preference is given to the participation of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMEs) established in the EU and associated countries. European SMEs shall follow the definition in the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. An organisation qualifies as an SME if the following thresholds apply:

- Less than 250 employees,
- Annual turnover <50 Mio EUR, and
- Annual balance sheet total <43 Mio EUR.

Those thresholds specifically apply for autonomous enterprises. If other organisations are linked or are partner organisations, the calculation needs to consider those relationships.

Please note that submission retained for funding must come from legal entities established in the European Union; or Switzerland, Israel, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Republic of Moldova or UK.

Please note, that proposers (i.e. coordinating proposer or any other partner in the consortium) must not be (direct) Beneficiaries of the SmartAgriHubs project (i.e. Grant Agreement No. 818182).

1.6 Can a consortium submit a proposal?

The proposals are submitted by one coordinating partner that manages the consortium of partners and in case of selection for funding would sign the sub-grant agreement on behalf of the consortium of partners.

1.7 Who can submit a proposal to the open calls?

The RESTART and EXPAND open calls are requesting for proposals submitted by Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH). A DIH ([Definition on the SAH website](#)) is rather a role of an organisation than the organisation as a whole entity. Of course, if there is a legal entity/organisation that was founded just with the role of being a DIH, it would also be eligible.

Organisations would also be eligible, if they have different missions as well as represent a role as Competence Centre (CC). However, before submitting a proposal, please register the DIH in the SmartAgriHubs portal and perform an innovation services maturity self-assessment.

1.8 How does my organisation qualify as DIH?

DIH(s) submitting a proposal to SmartAgriHubs need to explain their qualification and their offered service portfolio. It is not required to undergo a specific external certification procedure at proposal stage.

DIHs 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, providing the self-assessment results as part of the proposal. This shall help the experts evaluating your proposal to understand if the proposed strategy matches the current and potential future evolution of your organisation's qualification/ DIH innovation services.

Moreover, SmartAgriHubs ask all DIHs selected for funding for a later friendly peer-review by DIHs to also initiate experience exchange and facilitate collaboration in the DIH network.

1.9 Where do I find the tool for performing a DIH maturity self-assessment?

SmartAgriHubs developed the so called "SmartAgriHubs Innovation Services Maturity Model". This shall help DIHs to self-assess the maturity of the innovation services they are offering in their region. At the same time, all DIHs that are aiming at proposal submission in the next RESTART and EXPAND open call are required to add the results of the self-assessment to their proposal.

To realise a DIH maturity self-assessment for your organisation that is registered as a DIH in the SmartAgriHubs portal, you need to go to the "Your organisations" page. If your organisation is registered as a DIH, you can select the "growth" symbol that is displayed in the row, listing your organisation to start the self-assessment.

The results of the self-assessment need to be added to a proposal in the RESTART and EXPAND open calls for each DIH part of the proposal.

Moreover, when you reached the final page "Results Maturity Self Assessment", you can analyse your assessment. It is suggested you create an improvement plan and consult the Innovation Portal for learning materials. Furthermore, you can have a friendly peer review organized to help you improve your hub.

Note that your results are now stored. Note also that when you change the responses you will overwrite the associated results. The portal team is working on support for keeping past versions.

1.10 Who has access to the results of DIH maturity self-assessment?

We see the self-assessment primarily as data private to the DIH, so in principle, the data is available to the DIH members only. Technically, the self-assessment is also programmed and implemented as a separate module.

However, there are three exceptions to this principle that we would like to highlight:

- SmartAgriHubs work package 4 on Digital Innovation Hubs related matters ask you to reveal information under "non-disclosure" for the friendly-peer-reviewing.
- SmartAgriHubs will encourage DIHs to reveal parts of the maturity self-assessment results to the public profile, because this helps to better understand the profile and performance of the DIH. This should help in the matchmaking. We already know that e.g. corporates are demanding such profiling.
- SmartAgriHubs as a project will request access to parts of the self-assessment data, to be able to monitor the overall progress of self-assessments and to identify weak and strong points in the network. This shall enable the overall SmartAgriHubs project to identify requirements of the community and elaborate new directions for e.g. training materials. Also for benchmarking some level of access is clearly needed.

Please note: At the current moment in July 2020, these 3 items are NOT implemented. At this point your data is your data. Upon implementation on any of the three features, we will inform related organisations and ask for the related approvals.

1.11 Should only a single legal entity represent one DIH or can also a consortium of legal entities be considered as one DIH?

Both is possible. Either a Digital Innovation Hub is represented by one legal entity or by a group of legal entities.

However, for being able to submit a proposal in the scope of the open call, there can only be one legal entity that is submitting the proposal as coordinating partner. The other legal entities representing the DIH would need to join as partners of the overall consortium.

1.12 My DIH is a single legal entity, who should perform the self-assessment?

We were asked if the consortium executing the project or the DIH should perform the self-assessment. Each individual DIH participating in the project shall perform a maturity self-

assessment. In a case where there is only one DIH that is run by one legal entity, one shall consider the following:

- One of the items in 'General DIH maturity' about 'Governance' states in level 2 that "The DIH operates as a partnership among (two or more) consortium partners,"
- The self-assessment is intended for the DIH. The idea here is that the project (co-) funded by the open call should strengthen the profile of the DIH, so a self-assessment helps to identify that. For pragmatic reasons, consider your single organization as the consortium (of 1), and try to respond as realistically as possible.
- Consider if your single organization might benefit from becoming a consortium of 1+ to create more value for your ecosystem.

1.13 My DIH is a consortium of legal entities, who should perform the self-assessment?

You shall register your DIH in the SmartAgriHubs portal as an organisation. This can be done, even in cases where the DIH is realised by the collaboration of several legal entities. At the same time, different individuals can be assigned as members to the DIH in the SAH portal.

You need to decide as DIH team, if one single person or a team of individuals will perform the maturity self-assessment. However, you would need to realise it on behalf of the consortium of legal entities realising the DIH.

1.14 What kind of funding is offered by SmartAgriHubs?

SmartAgriHubs offers sub-grant agreements, providing funding in the scope of the project SmartAgriHubs that received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 818182".

Reimbursement by SmartAgriHubs will be released with respect to delivered results. Projects need to define deliverables, KPIs and related milestones, including how to measure the additional budget to be mobilised. The specific payment plan for reimbursing defined deliverables will be agreed in the contracting phase with the selected proposers.

1.15 What is the funding rate?

The overall strategic objective is to encourage DIHs to offer their innovation services in the European regions and facilitate digital innovation with knowledge as well as supporting potential innovation experiments to finance their activities in the most appropriate way.

Therefore, the overall budget of proposed activities shall be funded by 20% by the SmartAgriHubs project. However, it is not just an average funding for all, but in relation to the type of involved parties and their roles. Therefore, we are summarising the funding model in the following:

- **Funding for Digital Innovation Hubs:**
70% or 100% funding of their eligible costs, depending on the type of organisation. The requested funding shall represent max. 20% of the overall budget that is mobilised by the proposed initiative in total.
- **Innovation Experiments:**
 It is expected that the proposed activity and specifically the involved Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) are supporting 1 or more Innovation Experiments (IEs) with their innovation services. Also helping them to mobilise related budget/funding. This is considered as a basic mission of DIHs that shall be validated in the scope of SmartAgriHubs. This part of the overall activity budget (80%) is generally not funded by SmartAgriHubs, but asking DIH to help IEs to mobilise own budget as well as additional

sources of funding/investments. As outlined in the Open Call Programme document, there could be different sources of funding/budget that could complement the SmartAgriHubs contribution. Please find some examples below.

- Own investments of DIHs, IE partners.
- External private investment attracted by entities participating in the proposed project for the work intended to be realised.
- External public funding from additional sources, like regional, national, structural or also other EC funds. Nevertheless, the budget calculation shall be based on the definition of eligible costs and make sure that general total funding thresholds for the received EC funding are not exceeded in total when adding a SmartAgriHubs funding .
- In general, large infrastructural investments can account for the additional 80% of total budget, but the specific contribution to the proposed project and specifically IE need to be explained (e.g. like done for regular depreciation rates).

The additional 80% can be represented by financial investments as well as person effort to carry out the proposed project and the IEs in particular.

1.16 Are legal entities submitting proposals subject to the rules of the de minimis?

The submitted proposals are funded in the scope of the Horizon 2020 EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Therefore, the proposers are also asked to fulfil general contractual obligations (see Annex 3 of the Open Call Programme Document) and specifically with respect to the visibility of funding as well as contributing to the validation of the overall innovative approach and methodology elaborated by the SmartAgriHubs project, funded under Grant Agreement 818 182.

Therefore, the de minimis rule takes no effect in this type of funding.

Nevertheless, please consider the following rule as stated in section 6.5.3 of the SmartAgriHubs programme document:

- The proposer states that he/she will NOT request more than EUR 100,000 in total in one or more proposals selected by SmartAgriHubs.

1.17 What is the European Dimension of the Open Calls?

The strategic objective of the SmartAgriHubs project is the digitisation of European agriculture by fostering an agricultural innovation ecosystem dedicated to excellence, sustainability, and success. By generating new ideas for innovation experiments by the RESTART open call as well as to develop thorough strategies supporting digital innovation in the different European regions and facilitating collaboration of DIHs, CCs & IEs in the EXPAND open call, a European Community shall be established that is open for all stakeholders helping to access latest knowledge, technologies and experience gained.

1.18 How to combine SmartAgriHubs funding with additional public or private funds?

In the RESTART and EXPAND open calls, SmartAgriHubs generally provides a maximum of 20% as funding compared to the overall budget that would be required for the realisation of all the activities planned by a proposal.

1.19 What are the key benefits for a proposer/ consortium applying in the Open Call?

Besides a sub-grant provided by SmartAgriHubs that can be used for your proposed activities, you will become member of a European Network of DIHs, CCs and IEs that is covering all 27 member states. In further detail we would like to highlight the following collaboration potentials:

- Existing network of over 140 DIHs, enabling access to SMEs/startups/scale-ups
- Network of Competence Centres offering support in diverse fields of expertise
- Facilitated matchmaking to over 60 Flagship Innovation Experiments, including sub-projects from the EU funded research projects SmartAgriHubs and IoF2020.
- A well-equipped support team that is located in the different European regions with thorough experience in the domain of digital innovation

1.20 How do I have to plan the project?

Your project plan must follow the conditions as published in the Open Call publication document. It is crucial that you are defining a clear strategy, schedule, and properly defined results (i.e. deliverables) that will be elaborated. Please make sure, that SmartAgriHubs will be able to test and validate, if the planned deliverables are satisfactory implemented. This planning and the related list of deliverables will be the main references for reviews and deciding on the reimbursement of costs, based on a lump sum basis.

1.21 Can a legal entity apply for two different projects in the same open call?

There is no limit for the number of proposals you can submit. However, 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.

Moreover, the same work/costs proposed can only be funded by one project supported by SmartAgriHubs and not be presented in or reimbursed by two or more projects that receive funding from SmartAgriHubs. However, this does not exclude collaboration and joint work of different projects, where the costs are individually covered or covered by additional third parties' funding.

1.22 What language should the proposal be submitted in?

Proposals should be submitted in ENGLISH.

1.23 How do I proof excellence of my team?

The short presentation of your organisation shall outline your key competencies and previous experience with respect to relevant fields of expertise. Moreover, you need to provide short CVs of those individuals that will mainly work in your project – please do not put CVs of individuals that are finally not working or just with a minor role in your proposed work. Those CVs (approx. 3-10 lines of text) shall reflect their education and previous experiences that is relevant for the work proposed.

1.24 How should the proposal be submitted?

There will be a proposal management system that shall be used by the coordinating proposer. You need to register and provide some administrative data. The proposal shall be prepared as pdf document and uploaded in the system for evaluation.

1.25 What is a continuous submission scheme?

The RESTART and EXPAND open calls will be opened on Wednesday, July 08th 2020 and closed on Wednesday, July 28th, 2021, 17:00 CEST (Brussels time); or at an earlier date, in case the budget that is reserved for open calls in SmartAgriHubs 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.

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.

1.26 How will my proposal be evaluated?

Proposals will be evaluated by experts having thorough experience and are able to assess the quality of the proposals. The evaluators will be experts in the fields of innovation and digitisation, usually with previous experience in the business domain of agri-food. Generally, they shall also have prior experience in evaluating proposals.

Each proposal will be evaluated by three experts. The proposal evaluation will be documented internally, the results are communicated to the representatives of the European Commission and proposers will be informed, if they can be considered for funding.

Proposals will be evaluated and selected based on the Evaluation Criteria. To be considered for funding, your proposal must score above a certain threshold for each criterion, and above an overall threshold as published in the specific open calls. Decisions of the evaluators will be delivered "as-is" and are not subject to further discussions with proposers.

1.27 My proposal has been selected for funding, now what?

You will be informed by the SmartAgriHubs team and need to sign a sub-grant agreement. The basic terms and conditions are explained in further detail in the Open Call Programme Document that can be downloaded via the SmartAgriHubs website.

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. 2 weeks) the proposal will be not considered eligible.

1.28 Who owns the Intellectual Property generated in the scope of the proposed work?

Intellectual Property (IP) shall be the property of the Sub-grantee (or other Project partner) carrying out the work generating that result, unless otherwise agreed between the Project partners.

However, please consider the General Conditions with respect to Intellectual Property Rights, Use and Dissemination that will be part of the sub-grant agreement. These are presented in the Open Call Programme Document.

1.29 What must be reported for a reimbursement of costs?

You must present your work results, and a related documentation. The documentation must clearly present the elaborated deliverables in relation to your proposal that becomes

the annex to the sub-grant agreement. The results need to be delivered in a way, that the SmartAgriHubs team can review the results. If there is a need to present confidential information SmartAgriHubs will not disclose any intellectual property as far as indicated by your organisation.

1.30 Which kind of documents are requested for financial reporting for each of the cost categories in the budget?

SmartAgriHubs will reimburse the delivered results that need to be defined in terms of expected deliverables (e.g. services provided, implemented solution, events, activities), milestones (i.e. timing of results) and KPI (e.g. number of supported parties, realised interactions, attracted additional investors) on a lump sum basis." Therefore, please take the following into account:

- For calculation of costs in the proposal and as input for the negotiation if selected, please use the budget categories as listed in the open call documents. Since as also highlighted in the Annotated Model Grant Agreement of the EC on page 779 "For General Lump Sum grants, the rules on the calculation of the revised final grant amount are in principle the same as in the General MGA (see Article 5.3 H2020 General MGA)."
- The cost reporting with respect to lump sums is not focusing on the financial reporting. It is rather asking you to declare at jointly agreed milestones that you implemented the action as planned. The eligibility condition that must be fulfilled is that the action tasks have been carried out as described in the Annex 1 of the sub-grant agreement prepared during the negotiation phase.
- Please be aware, that for General Lump Sum grants, improper implementation of the action not in accordance with the Annex 1 does NOT lead to a reduction of the grant, but to the ineligibility of the costs. Therefore, if the action is not carried out as described in the Annex 1, costs will be rejected proportionally to the tasks or parts of the action not implemented.

1.31 Can a proposer spend any amount of the requested funding on subcontracting?

As mentioned in the programme document: "Subcontractors can also participate, up to a maximum of 10% of the total funding."

- However, we shall possibly also reflect on the reasons for this:
- It would generally not make sense to put large budgets on subcontracting, since in that case the subcontractor could become the contractor.
- Moreover, it might be difficult for an evaluator to evaluate the excellence of the team.
- At the same time, we must also remember the underlying calculation models. Subcontractors are usually asking for a "price" not for "cost reimbursement", where the price might include a certain amount of profit. Therefore, aiming at a large amount of subcontracting would not be a very good practice to assure cost reimbursement and not profit generation by taxpayers' money.

1.32 How will the funding be provided?

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.

1.33 The European Commission or the Research Executive Agency can ask for an audit – what does this mean?

It is neither explicitly planned, nor predefined, but the European Commission may, at any time during the implementation of the project and up to five years after the end of the project, ask for financial audits or technical checks, reviews, audits and/or investigations to be carried out, by external auditors/ experts, or by the Commission services themselves including OLAF. You need to keep your contractual documents and documentation of results elaborated at the defined milestones and specifically those main milestones that served for the review of being able to decide on the reimbursement of costs.

1.34 What happens if I accomplish my project earlier compared to the initial plan?

You can initiate the review procedure by SmartAgriHubs earlier and update your planning for post project activities. However, due to aspects of efficiency within the overall project, the review might not take place immediately, but tries to group reviews of several accomplished projects. However, you would be informed accordingly.

1.35 Is 100% funding possible for a limited liability company that reinvests the profits and not providing them to its shareholders?

The decision if a company can be considered as a non-profit organisation shall be based on the formal status of the organisation and if the tax authorities are accepting this organisation accordingly. Concerning a company's internal decision to use its profit not as payment for shareholders, but as reinvestment as normal business strategy it usually not represent a non-profit organisation, since the profit can be realised at any later point in time e.g. in an exit when selling company shares.

1.36 If the main applicant qualifies for a 70% grant, and another partner for 100% reimbursement of costs, do they receive different %?

Yes, eligible costs for funding need to be calculated in accordance to the type of partners in the consortium.

1.37 Can a DIH be partner in a project if they are already sub-contractor of SmartAgriHubs?

Organisations that have a sub-contract with a SmartAgriHubs beneficiary are generally eligible, if there are no other links to beneficiaries that could cause a conflict of interest.

1.38 Can SmartAgriHubs beneficiaries be subcontracted by a proposed project?

Generally, SmartAgriHubs is aiming at the involvement of new parties to expand the network and not to expand the work of parties that are already SAH beneficiaries.

However, from a formal perspective, we shall look at page 146 of the "H2020 Programme; AGA – Annotated Model Grant Agreement; Version 5.2 from 26 June 2019" (https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-

amga_en.pdf). It is highlighted the following definition for “Subcontractors” as used in Article 13 of the SmartAgriHubs Grant Agreement:

- “Subcontractors — Subcontractors participate in the action by carrying out action tasks for the beneficiary. They are NOT beneficiaries and therefore have no direct obligations under the grant agreement [...]”

Therefore, the answer is “No”. Nevertheless, SmartAgriHubs considers it positive to facilitate collaboration of Digital Innovation Hubs and Competence Centres involved as beneficiaries in SmartAgriHubs with new Digital Innovation Hubs submitting a proposal. Therefore, we added the following statement in the Open Call Programme Document:

- The current SmartAgriHubs beneficiaries (i.e. specifically DIHs and CCs) will however be able to support the proposed project with up to 10% of the funding requested in the proposal. If you expect an added value by an involvement of a SmartAgriHubs beneficiary, please explain this in your proposal. This shall be generally agreed with the related SmartAgriHubs beneficiary before submitting your proposal. The following minimum explanation is required:
 - Envisaged type and purpose of involvement of current SmartAgriHubs partner(s)
 - Expected amount of effort required
 - Type of results and experiences that shall be used from one of the current FIEs, also explaining how it would be (commercially) used
 - Number of meetings, trips or other activities required by existing partners

This support would be realised according to Article 4.2 of the SmartAgriHubs Grant Agreement. However, this possibility is rather considered useful for the EXPAND the NETWORK open call. But please discuss this with the specific DIH. If they consider that there would be a need for a budget transfer, they shall contact the project coordinator and we will finally review all those requests with the “SmartAgriHubs Strategic Guidance Board”.

Of course, it needs to be made sure to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the action is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest (‘conflict of interests’).

1.39 How to justify the costs/efforts of third parties (i.e. 80% that is not funded)?

The main cost reporting and related rules (i.e. general conditions as mentioned in the open call programme document) are focusing on the funding that will be provided by SmartAgriHubs to DIHs in the scope of the sub-grant agreement.

However, at the same time, the DIH needs to develop/offer an approach that will clearly identify and confirm the overall budget that was spent in the scope of the overall project. For that purpose, stakeholders in the IEs would need to explain their costs and investments mobilised. Besides the documentation towards SmartAgriHubs, this shall also help the DIH to understand the required effort and investment required for the realisation of specific digital innovations.

SmartAgriHubs did not predefine a very specific format for this to avoid an incompatibility with respect to different approaches applied by DIHs when providing innovation services. At the same time, it shall allow the mobilisation of budgets of diverse nature on top of the SmartAgriHubs funding.

As mentioned in the open call programme document, the additional 80% of the total budget can be for example:

- Own investments of DIHs, IE partners or CCs.

- External private investment attracted by entities participating in the proposed project for the work intended to be realised.
- External public funding from additional sources, like regional, national, structural or also other EC funds. Nevertheless, the budget calculation shall be based on the definition of eligible costs and make sure that general total funding thresholds for the received EC funding are not exceeded in total when adding a SmartAgriHubs funding.
- In general, large infrastructural investments can account for the additional 80% of total budget, but the specific contribution to the proposed project and specifically IE need to be explained (e.g. like done for regular depreciation rates).
- The additional 80% can be represented by financial investments as well as person effort to carry out the proposed project and the IEs in particular.

1.40 Can a project assign SmartAgriHubs funding to an Innovation Experiment?

SmartAgriHubs does not consider this as a general approach in the RESTART and EXPAND open calls. 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.

These 5% are in relation to the 20% of the DIHs funding (e.g. 5 to 25 kEUR in cases of 100 to 500 kEUR requested funding by DIHs). In such cases this funding can be deducted from the 80% budget assigned to the IE realisation.

The idea of this possibility was to specifically support the realisation of innovation services that are helping to initiate IEs. Since local events or hackathon type of activities might be a first step to initiate IEs what would represent an innovation support service that is offered by a DIH.

1.41 Is there an expected size of Hackathons, Datathons or Challenges?

We did not define a specific size for the hackathon type of activities (e.g. hackathon, datathon, challenges). Since evaluating the impact of those activities just by looking at the size as one criterion could be misleading.

We think that the overall concept and strategy matters. Since we assume that many criteria will influence the potential impact of proposed activities. Therefore, it might even be more interesting to think about the potential output that those activities could generate to achieve the strategic objectives of the open call.

1.42 Is there an expected size of Innovation Experiments?

The key objective of the EXPAND open call is to fund the provision of innovation support services by DIHs. Examples for this are the Flagship Innovation Experiments as realised in the SmartAgriHubs project from the very beginning. Each of such Innovation Experiments (IEs) has an overall budget that includes e.g. the effort and investment by DIHs, CCs, farmers, cooperatives, machinery providers, ICT developers, agronomists, researchers and others.

In the EXPAND open call we are focusing on the DIHs, saying that they are providing their innovation support services to a single or several IEs. At the same time, we would like to support a critical mass of work, enabling a DIH to validate its services on a reasonable scale. Therefore, SmartAgriHubs is asking DIHs to propose initiatives where they expect at least some budget/funding on their side of 100 kEuro. Assuming that this would be invested in the realisation of coaching and support of IEs over a period of 12-18 months.

SAH considers that this would represent sufficient person effort to have a reasonable dedication over the IEs duration. Moreover, please keep in mind the following:

- As an example - one or several DIH(s) would ask for 100 kEuro funding, representing 20% of total budget required for the support of one or more IEs. This would mean that all the other involved partners (i.e. not of DIH type) would invest a minimum of some additional 400 kEuro. This investment would be generated from own or other sources, while not coming from SmartAgriHubs.
- SmartAgriHubs does not predefine, how many IEs would be supported by the DIH. Therefore, this could mean that one IE of 400kEUR is supported by one or several DIHs, but there might be other initiatives in a region or in several regions, where DIH(s) is/are supporting for example 10 IEs at min. 40kEUR or 40 IEs at min. 10kEUR own investment each.
- The DIH or a group of DIHs shall elaborate a strategic approach that would make sense for their region and the regional needs of the larger stakeholder community. Therefore, we did not define the size of innovation experiments. Since SmartAgriHubs is aware about the varying requirements and status in the different European regions.
- As said before, the basic intention is to make sure that the DIH has enough critical mass for being able to offer, test and validate their innovation support services to analyse and understand the varying requirements and needs in the regions as well as to learn from different approaches applied by DIHs. If the DIH budget would be at a minor scale, SmartAgriHubs is afraid that there is not enough personnel to realise such validation efforts.

1.43 I have another question not yet answered in this FAQ document, whom to ask?

If you have any additional/other questions regarding the Open Call, you can also look at the [SmartAgriHubs Forum's Open Call category](#). If your question is also not yet answered there, please create a new topic in the Open Call category. The SmartAgriHubs Open Call team will regularly answer the questions.

Moreover, the SmartAgriHubs team will update this document regularly with answered questions from the SmartAgriHubs Forum as well as discussed at events, webinars or individually raised.

1.44 How can I access the SmartAgriHubs Forum to ask additional questions?

For being able to ask a question in the SmartAgriHubs Forum, you need to register in the SmartAgriHubs Portal. This registration is done in some minutes, without any costs or contractual obligations. On top of that, it offers access to additional material and information like:

- Training material,
- Library with diverse expertise offered by the SAH community,
- Map with the members of the SmartAgriHubs Community Network, enabling to find potential partners for digital innovation related activities as well as enabling you to add your organisation,
- Calendar listing the latest online and offline events, and
- Forum to offer an interactive place to get in touch with the larger community network having an interest in Digital Innovation

2. Disclaimer

The information in this document is provided "as is" at the time of preparation. The specific open call announcement documents will specify the details to be considered for proposal preparation. Therefore, the terms set out in the Call Open Call documents shall take precedence over those in this document.

Especially with respect to potential future open calls (i.e. not yet published) the user thereof uses the information at its sole risk and liability.