DIH4AI OPEN CALL 2

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING THE OPEN CALL 2

Countries of Origin

- **Can an SME from a country which is outside the EU-27 Region?**

  Here you can find a list of Associated Countries who are eligible for H2020, apart from the EU-28 ones.

Participants in the Experiments

- **Can one SME apply along with a DIH which is not actually its regional DIH?**

  Yes. The "regional DIH" terminology refers to DIHs included in the JRC Catalogue, relatively near the SME or the SME being part of its Ecosystem, who has proven capacities on the AI domain in terms of infrastructure, "know-how" and experience. The term "regional" is being commonly used to reflect the very same concept of DIH, i.e., Smart Specialisation and supporting SME digitisation to overcome the geographical and ecosystem barriers and some others such as the language used for intercommunication of agents, for instance).
  In summary, as long as the collaboration among the AI SMEs and "regional" AI DIHs responds to the challenges and terms of the Call (whether type 'A' or 'B'), their collaboration is not restricted to any particular geographical boundary.

- **If there is a case in which there is an established regional DIH with expertise on the AI domain, and this DIH is formed by several entities (Universities, Research and Technological Organisations, etc.), may one of these individual entities represent the DIH in a mini-consortium?**

  The criterium established by the Call is that the DIH must be included in the JRC Catalogue. However, if a single entity which is part of that specific DIH does have the infrastructure and "know-how" in order to support an experiment standalone, it is eligible as part of the mini-consortium for the DIH4AI Open Call 2 in representation of that DIH.
  This may happen, since, often, DIHs are not yet constituted legal entities themselves.

- **May a DIH who is categorised in the JRC Catalogue as "In preparation" or "Potential DIH from H2020" apply as participant for the Open Call 2 within a mini-consortium?**

Yes, as long as they are included in the Catalogue, the "Evolutionary status" does not matter and they may apply along with an AI SME.

- **May an organisation apply more than once to the Call – to be chosen for funding in more than one mini-consortia?**

  This is strictly forbidden for the AI SMEs, who can only apply to the Open Call 2 as being part of one (1) mini-consortium.
  For the DIHs, there is the possibility that they could be present in more than one proposal; but, eventually, at the evaluation process, the role of the DIH4AI Consortium will consist in ensuring a geographical balance criterion among all European regions, in terms of DIHs incorporated to the network.

- **Which kind of agreement is needed, between the participants in the mini-consortium? Do the mini-consortium needs to share the details for the collaboration at the time of submitting the proposal?**

  This is totally external to the DIH4AI Consortium, and up to the participants in each proposal. The DIH4AI Consortium will not ask for the contractual conditions in which the SME-DIH collaboration is performed.
  The participants should, however, state, in the proposal, which kind of support, in the form of services, are to be provided by the DIH, as part of the Experiment. It is not mandatory to follow the L-BEST categorisation in the Annex 1; but, instead, it is just provided as support and possible inspiration.
  Please, advance to the next question for more information on this topic.

Role of the DIH(s) within the Experiments

- **Which kind of support must the DIH(s) present in each proposal offer to the leading Technology Provider SME, as part of the Experiment? What does "Training and Skills Development and Technical Scouting and Mentoring" mean?**

  A list of services is provided in the Annex 1 to this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, according to the categorisation made by the DIH4AI Project, in good alignment with EU DIH service corridors. It provides an insight on the different service categories and types of individual services, and may serve as inspiration for AI SMEs. The kind of services offered should not exclusively be from the Skills Development and Technology Development categories. However, there should be at least one service from any of these two grand Service Categories considered by the proposal.

- **Which kind of support can one applicant SME expect from the DIHs from within the DIH4AI Consortium?**

  The Technical and Skills development support will actually come from the DIH(s) present in the mini-consortia who apply for the Open Call and are selected in the evaluation process.

Verticals / Sectorial Areas of application

- **May an AI SME participate with a solution designed for another vertical (Health, Transport, etc.)?**

  The in-development solution must be applied to any of the 6 sectorial areas proposed in the Open Call 2 (Agrifood, Earth Observation, Finance and Insurance, Manufacturing, Public Administration and Energy). However, an AI SME who has designed, and, until now, tested a solution for another vertical (Health or Transport, for example), may find another end user SME (a Manufacturing SME, for instance) from one of these 6 mentioned sectors, or a Public Body, and participate in the Open Call 2 by providing yet another application to their solution.

Technological development

- **Which level of technological maturity should the AI SMEs be seeking, for their solutions, after the Experiment?**

  The solutions should be around TRL levels 7-8. Participants may have in-development solutions at TRL 4-5, at the time of submitting the proposal – this is just provided as reference.

IPR and Exploitation

- **Who will have the exploitation rights of the solution developed within the Experiment?**

  The owners of the solution will be the participants of each mini-consortium, this is, the participants of each Open Call Experiment. The exploitation model shall be decided internally among them, as it is understood as something external to the DIH4AI beneficiaries.

- **What does "feasibility analysis of the solution in the AI4EU catalogue" mean? Why will this be considered at the time of evaluating the proposal?**

  This means that, as one of the objectives of the DIH4AI Open Call is to enlarge the catalogue of experiments available for the European AI-on-demand Platform (AI4EU), the proposers which consider their plans to include their solutions in the AI4EU platform already in the proposal will be more positively evaluated.

Financials

- **Are the Indirect Costs of 25% fixed in the proposal?**

  Yes, this is due to H2020 regulations, which are applicable in this case. Indirect Costs are calculated as the 25% of the Personnel, Equipment, Consumables and Travel.
  At the time of elaborating the Financial Reports, however, a "lump sum" approach will be taken and costs will not need to be justified concept-by-concept by participants in the Experiments. More information about this approach is provided in the following question.

- **In terms of the financial aspect, what does the concept of "lump sum" mean?**

  This means that, in the proposal, the budget must be divided in the specified categories (Personnel, Equipment, Travel, Licensing, Subcontracting, and fixed indirect costs of 25%), in order to calculate the financial support each participant of the mini-consortium is eligible to. However, in the submitted cost statements, during the development of the Experiment, the DIH4AI Consortium will not ask the Open Call 2 winners for the detail of, for instance, how many PMs invested have corresponded to one researcher or another.
  This is done in order to facilitate that the maximum efforts are assigned to technical development, instead of to administrative purposes.

- **What is the minimum funding allocated to each of the partner?**

  The minimum budget allocated to each partner must be 15% but since the SMEs will be financed at 70% and the DIH at 100% the minimum funding can be more than 15%.
  In the most common case of a consortium composed by a SME and the DIH, where the DIH will have the 15% of the budget allocated, the minimum funding for the DIH calculated proportionally, is shown in the table below.

1 Participant (Organisation name)	2 Participant short name	3 Country	4 Type of Participant (SME / DIH)	5 First time EU project? (Y/N)	6 PIC number (mandatory)	7 Total cost	8 Reimbursement rate (100% or 70%)	9 Requested funding (7x 8)
SME	XXX	X	SME	X	XXX	114.093€	70%	79.866
DIH	XXX	X	DIH	X	XXX	20.134€	100%	20.134
TOTAL						134.227€		100.000€

Evaluation

- **How will the evaluation process be performed?**

The evaluation will be mixed, both internal and external.
External experts (who can apply also, through the EMS, to participate in this evaluation process, until the deadline date) will be in charge of evaluating the proposals, as per the 3 criteria specified in the Guide for Applicants (Excellence and Innovation, Impact and Industrial Relevance, and Implementation).
The internal role of the DIHs, at the same time, will consist in guaranteeing a balance between the Intra-Regional and Cross-Regional Experiments, and, also, in procuring the extension of the AI DIH network to as many European regions as possible.

Annex 1: L-BEST services

Service Category (L BEST)	Service sub-Class	Relation to individual Services provided
LEGAL and ETHICAL	**Legal and IPR Assistance**	This group of services describes all the activities to the support SMEs in ensuring the legal compliance in the design, deployment and/or use of the AI solutions, in terms of legal advice and support, IPR assistance and management, Model agreements and assistance, and Regulatory Sandboxes
	Ethical AI Organisational Support	This group of services describes all the activities to support SMEs in responding to business processes review and organizational changes to ensure a more trustworthy AI. It includes support for the definition of an internal AI Code of Conduct, Ethics-related organizational measures and training on Ethical and Legal AI services
	Ethical AI Lifecycle Assistance and Assessment	This group of services describes all the activities related to support SMEs when dealing with a single AI-based solution, across its entire development life cycle, from the design to deployment and, last, monitoring (risk assessment, development of ethically-aware AI solutions, conformity assessment, certification and audit)
BUSINESS Development	**Incubation acceleration support**	To drive customers to access to basic and specialised facilities (from meeting rooms and co-working areas to laboratories and high technological infrastructures) and to support them in business development
	Access to finance	To connect the customer with different funding sources (EU, national, regional or private), aiming at achieving an effective mix of funds)
	Offering housing	To offer innovation spaces to their ecosystem members to interact and sharing ideas
	Business training and education	Providing formal courses, workshops and seminars about business topics. This type of service is in a borderline position since it could have been included in the Skill class, but as it is now, the Business class contains the full range of services related to business
	Project development	Identifying opportunities through strategic analysis of the ecosystem and trend watching (see next class Ecosystem),

		developing new proposals, creating consortia
ECOSYSTEM Development	**Community building**	Mapping and engaging people to create consortia, but also involving other DIHs
	DIH Innovation development	This includes trend watching, to monitor the market and to be updated about transformation of sectors of interest and latest news. These activities are strongly related to Business class, since they are the enablers to ideate and develop new projects
	Ecosystem governance	It is performed both via a structured set of governance rules and via a set of KPIs in order to monitor performance
SKILLS Development	**Process and organisational maturity**	Providing self- or guided assessments to measure the company digitisation level, readiness for Industry 4.0 and AI adoption. Typically, such assessments are followed by a collaborative stage involving experts where the roadmap towards transformation is defined
	Human capabilities maturity	Measuring the level of digital/technological skills at worker level. As it happens at company level, the individual competence assessment is followed by a strategy definition to fill the gaps
	Skills improvement	Providing and/or suggesting the specific educational programmes, putting at disposal and/or identifying training repositories. Courses may be addressed to people starting from scratch or to workers who want to consolidate a competence, to trainers who want to be constantly updated regarding new digital and AI solutions
TECHNOLOGY Development	**Ideas management and materialisation**	Related to the first stages of the whole process which ends in the implementation and adoption of a digital solution. It includes consultancy about new ideas, feasibility analysis and readiness assessment of the specific technology to be implemented
	Contract research	It is performed both by considering collaborative R&D projects (where the customer can develop the new solution with the support of other partners) and by supporting the customer to prepare a Proof of Concept (PoC) of the solution, evaluating its feasibility
	Provision of infrastructure	Providing to the customer a set of tools, platform, lab facilities where the solution can be developed and/or tested

	Technical support on scale-up	Supporting the customer to move from an embryonic start-up idea to a saleable solution equipped with a business model
	Verification and Validation	Certifying the product or making sure that it passes all functional, performance and quality assurance tests and by organizing public demonstration in front of possible clients
	Data acquisition and sensing	It focuses on the first stages of the data lifecycle or digital thread, including mainly activities as data acquisition (also using sensors), data protection, ETL implementation
	Data processing and analysis	It includes data storage and a preliminary data analysis
	Decision-making	Data driven solutions require the implementation of machine learning models, simulation tools, Big Data analysis (often complemented by a Big Data architecture configuration)
	Physical-human action and interaction	It comprises from the more basic data visualisation, UI and navigation, to the more complex Collaborative Intelligence (where human and machines are allowed to work together)
	Data sharing	This kind of services range from data anonymisation and governance rules' definition for GDPR compliancy to the full implementation and usage of Data Spaces