



# AI REGIO

## AI REGIO OPEN CALL 1 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

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## Revision History

Date (dd.mm.yyyy)	Version	Author	Comments
20.05.2021	1.0	CARSA	FAQ version 1.0 completed
14.06.2021	1.1	CARSA	Questions 3.2, 3.3 and 3.6 included
29.07.2021	1.2	CARSA	Reference number 3 updated Question 3.5 included
13.09.2021	1.3	CARSA	Question 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 included



## 1 Introduction

The present document provides a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers related to the AI REGIO Open Call 1. The list of questions is preliminary and the document will be continuously updated in the course of the process.

More information on the Call for Proposals can be found in the Guide for Applicants available on the AI REGIO webpage (<https://www.airegio-project.eu/open-calls>).

## 2 General questions

### 2.1 What is AI REGIO?

AI REGIO is a European project, precisely an Innovation Action, supported by the European Commission through the ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs (I4MS) initiative. AI REGIO aims to consolidate the collaboration in the pan-European network of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) by enhancing the offering of regional DIHs to manufacturing SMEs on three levels: policy impact, technological impact and business impact.

Through two open calls, the project will support a total of 16 experiments. The 1<sup>st</sup> open call for experiments will support up to 8 SME-driven experiments.

## 3 Questions related to the call

### 3.1 What is the call for proposals/experiments?

The objective for the first open call of AI REGIO project is to select up to 8 **SME-driven experiments** to complement AI REGIO in the extension of the current portfolio of “AI for Manufacturing” solutions; extending the domains of the AI REGIO Champions<sup>1</sup>; and benefiting directly SMEs in underrepresented regions, with the perspective to join VANGUARD Initiative<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.2 Can SMEs from regions that are members of the Vanguard Initiative apply to the Open Calls?

Yes, SMEs from the Vanguard Initiative regions can apply to the Open Calls, as well as SMEs outside of these regions.

### 3.3 Which regions in particular are considered “underrepresented” regions?

Proposals extending the current AI REGIO ecosystem (which includes 13 vanguard regions) will be positively considered, especially when including other Vanguard Initiative regions<sup>3</sup>, namely underrepresented regions.

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<sup>1</sup> Experiments conducted along the whole duration of the project and strongly linked to DIHs and the regional smart specialization strategies.

<sup>2</sup> Vanguard Initiative: <https://www.s3vanguardinitiative.eu/>

<sup>3</sup> Vanguard initiative regions: <https://www.s3vanguardinitiative.eu/members>



### 3.4 Who can apply?

The AI-REGIO open call is addressed to **digital and/or manufacturing SMEs**, associated in mini-consortia with Digital Innovation Hub (DIHs) and, eligible for Horizon 2020. Only one proposal will be accepted by each SME.

Mini-consortia have to be composed of:

- 1 manufacturing SME, as the leader of the consortium;
- 1 DIH, as reported in the DIH catalogue<sup>4</sup>;
- ICT solution provider or technological RTO (optional).

**SMEs:** digital and/or manufacturing SMEs, as defined in the European Commission recommendation 2003/361/EC<sup>5</sup>, as published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 124, p. 36 of 20 May 2003.

“The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.” Extract of Article 2 of the annex to Recommendation 2003/361/EC.

**DIHs:** following the description by the European Commission website: “DIHs are one-stop shops that help companies become more competitive with regard to their business/production processes, products or services using digital technologies. DIHs provide access to technical expertise and experimentation, so that companies can “test before invest”. They also provide innovation services, such as financing advice, training and skills development that are needed for a successful digital transformation”<sup>6</sup>. Participating DIHs in this open call must be registered in the DIH catalogue and should mention “manufacture” in one of their smart specialization categories.

**ICT solution provider:** An ICT solution provider, which can be either an SME or a large enterprise, or a technological RTO can be included in the mini-consortium.

### 3.5 Can the RTO or SME acting as a solution provider be from any region?

Yes, the solution provider can be from any region.

### 3.6 Can AI REGIO partners apply to the call?

AI REGIO partners are not eligible as members of the mini-consortium. The application will be disqualified.

### 3.7 If we are part of a DIH and the work in supporting the SME will be entirely done by us, who should apply as a partner, us or the DIH?

You, as part of a DIH, can apply as a partner as you will represent the DIH. In this case, make sure to clearly explain in the proposal your role in the experiment and the DIH you are part of.

<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digital-innovation-hubs-tool>

<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>

<sup>6</sup> Source: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/edihs>



### 3.8 Which are the accepted costs for the budget?

All kind of costs are accepted as long as they are required for the execution of the pilot experiment and the development of the deliverables. The budget requested has to be presented and described in the proposal.

### 3.9 We are not sure that we can participate because of the 100K Euros per third parties limit rule. How should we proceed?

All third parties have a maximum limit of EUR 100.000,00 to be received as Financial Support to third Parties (FSTP) in Smart Anything Everywhere (SAE) and ICT innovation for Manufacturing SMEs (I4MS) initiatives. Regardless, you may participate in the call, keeping in mind that if selected, the AI REGIO Project Officer will take this into consideration, and you will be eligible to receive the corresponding amount that ensures your organisation does not surpass this limit.

### 3.10 How to apply?

Consortia are invited to apply by submitting a complete Proposal following the proposal template on the submission platform: <https://airegio.ems-carsa.com/>. The template for proposal is available on the submission platform, as well as on the AI REGIO website.

### 3.11 When is the deadline?

The call's deadline is on 30/09/2021 at 13h00 (CET),

The key dates of the open call are as follows:

Activity	Dates
Call opening	01/06/2021
Call closing	30/09/2021
Assignment of evaluators	01/10/2021-15/10/2021
Evaluation of proposals	08/10/2021-19/11/2021
Communication of results	22/11/2021-24/11/2021
Sub-grant Agreements	25/11/2021-10/12/2021
Execution of experiments	13/12/2021-31/07/2022