



AI REGIO

AI REGIO OPEN CALL 2 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

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Revision History

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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 1st 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 second open call of AI REGIO project is to select up to 17 **SME-driven experiments**:

- **10 Type A experiments:** Single participant (SME) projects, applicable to TOPIC-1 and TOPIC-2
- **7 Type B experiments:** Mini-consortia (SME + DIH + optional third partner), applicable to TOPIC-1, TOPIC-2 and TOPIC-3 (all the TOPICS)

These experiments will complement AI REGIO in the extension of the current portfolio of “AI for Manufacturing” solutions; extending the domains of the AI REGIO Champions¹; and benefiting directly SMEs in underrepresented regions, with the perspective to join VANGUARD Initiative².

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.

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

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



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

Proposals extending the initial AI REGIO ecosystem (which includes 13 vanguard regions) will be positively considered, especially when including other Vanguard Initiative regions³, namely underrepresented regions.

3.4 Who can apply?

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

Therefore, two possibilities are considered:

TYPE A INDIVIDUAL PROPOSAL	Proposal presented by a single organisation ; namely an SME .
TYPE B MINI CONSORTIUM PROPOSAL	Proposal presented by Mini-consortia composed of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 manufacturing SME, as the leader of the consortium;• 1 DIH, as reported in the DIH catalogue;• ICT solution provider or technological RTO (optional).

Find bellow a formal definition of the eligible categories:

SMEs: digital and/or manufacturing SMEs, as defined in the European Commission recommendation 2003/361/EC⁴, 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”⁵. 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/RTO: 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 Vanguard initiative regions: <https://www.s3vanguardinitiative.eu/members>

⁴ Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>

⁵ Source: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/edihs>



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 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.

3.8 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.

3.9 How to apply?

The proposals are submitted digitally, by the SME, in a single-stage through the Evaluation Management System (EMS). Proposals prepared according to the instructions provided, shall be submitted electronically through the EMS platform. Applicants should follow the steps starting from the AI REGIO EMS website (<https://airegio.ems-carsa.com/login>).

3.10 When is the deadline?

The call's deadline is on 29/07/2022 at 12h00 (CET).

The key dates of the open call are as follows:

Activity	Dates
Call opening	02/05/2022
Call closing	09/09/2022 – 12:00 CET
Assignment of evaluators	12/09/2022-23/09/2022
Evaluation of proposals	26/09/2022-21/10/2022
Communication of results	24/10/2022-26/10/2022
Sub-grant Agreements	27/10/2022-18/11/2022
Execution of experiments	21/11/2022-14/07/2023