



SmartAgriHubs Open Call Definition

SERVICE the SmartAgriHubs Community Network

Author	SmartAgriHubs WP2
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Topic	Open Call for Digital Innovation Hubs that are developing and offering support services for agri-food stakeholders and related community networks for the digital innovation and transformation of their products, processes or business and governance models.
Status	Final

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 "SERVICE the SmartAgriHubs Community Network".

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". However, specific terms for the SERVICE Open Call published in this document take precedence over general conditions and requirements defined in the Open Call Programme document.

Call Topic:

Open call for projects realised by Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) that aim at services for the support of digital transformation in the agri-food domain. For this call, projects shall develop, innovate, provide, validate and/or improve services provided by Digital Innovation Hubs. Tangible innovation services shall be provided by DIHs. They shall aim at supporting the set-up and realisation of digital innovation activities realised by stakeholders of agri-food communities and related networks. [Annex 5](#) provides a list of these DIH services and general examples of fundable activities.

Expected Results:

One or more Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) shall develop and/or deliver and validate their function as a service provider, helping agri-food companies and related stakeholders to become more competitive by improving their business, products and/or production processes. DIHs shall act as a one-stop-shop, serving agri-food related companies within their region and making agri-food related businesses more competitive by speeding up the development and uptake of digital innovations. They help customers addressing their challenges in a business focused way and with a service model, offering services that would not be readily accessible elsewhere. The funded services available through a DIH shall enable any business to access the latest knowledge, expertise and technology for testing and experimenting with digital innovations relevant to their products, processes or business models. DIHs usually provide connections with investors, facilitate access to financing for digital transformations, help connect users and suppliers of digital innovations across the value chain, and foster synergies between digital and other key enabling technologies. The proposed project shall support individual or groups/networks of stakeholders in the DIH's region or in several regions based on the cooperation of several DIHs proposing a project.

If selected for funding under the SERVICE the Network Open Call, the following deliverables shall be provided to SmartAgriHubs:

- Report on the available and provided DIH innovation services, their maturity level, outlining experiences, lessons learnt with respect to service provision and improvements of the DIH services.
- Organising real-world and/or online events with other DIHs, and specifically those involved in the SmartAgriHubs community, for experience exchange and development of joint collaboration schemes.
- Report on the supported stakeholders of agri-food communities and related networks, explaining the provided services and approach for delivering them to stakeholders, key achievements, the teams involved as well as effort, budget and in-kind contribution spent by directly and indirectly supported stakeholders. Detailing the business model(s) for future DIH operation.

Key results shall be presented in detail via the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal and specifically focus on the innovative services offered by the

DIHs. Projects need to provide a description for publication via the SmartAgriHubs communication channels, specifically explaining the following:

- DIH innovation services provided as well as approach for innovative service delivery and validation
- Innovative aspects of your service provision and lessons learnt
- Involved parties, infrastructure, and places
- Supported stakeholders, networks and communities, also outlining their achievements and added value of the provided DIH(s) services
- Regional challenges, needs and opportunities with respect to digital innovation in the agri-food domain.

The proposal needs to explain a strategy for the exploitation and ownership of the DIH service delivery approach.

Potential Proposers: Activities shall be proposed by one or several Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH)¹ in accordance with their definition in the SmartAgriHubs open call programme document as well as offering or planning to offer at least one or more innovation services as listed in Annex 5.

Each organisation in the team submitting a proposal should have a substantial input in the project of at least 10% of the total requested funding. The contract with SmartAgriHubs will be signed by one DIH leading the proposed work and distributing the payments to the involved organisations. Any other organizations besides the coordinating DIH can also participate up to a maximum of 90% of the total funding. The role of those organisations shall also be to offer or plan to offer at least one or more innovation services as listed in Annex 5 in cooperation with the coordinating DIH or other DIHs involved in the proposed project.

Including the SERVICE open call, organisations can only receive funding in maximum of four different projects (i.e. sub-grants) funded by SmartAgriHubs in the scope of its open calls.

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

DIHs need to perform a DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment², providing the self-assessment results as justification for the proposal.

Proposals shall detail the overall budget and/or effort that is planned to be assigned and/or mobilised for/by the involvement and support of small, medium, and micro enterprises.

Current SmartAgriHubs beneficiaries can also be involved in a proposal. Proposers need to agree it in advance to the proposal submission. The budget would be transferred internally in the SmartAgriHubs project. Support per individual proposal would be limited to a maximum of 25,000 Euro per SmartAgriHubs beneficiary and a max. total amount of 50,000 Euro per proposal (i.e. please note that this shall be considered as part of the max. total contribution by SmartAgriHubs as listed in the next item on available funding).

¹ DIHs participating in a proposed project, must register in the SmartAgriHubs portal before submitting a proposal (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/network>). DIH(s) submitting a proposal to SmartAgriHubs need to explain their qualification and the offered service portfolio. It is not required to undergo a specific external certification procedure at proposal stage.

² Using the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Services Maturity Model self-assessment tool, available in the SmartAgriHubs portal via the "Tools" page (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/portal/tools>).

Available Funding:	<p>SmartAgriHubs considers that proposals requesting a contribution from SmartAgriHubs between 50,000 and 200,000 Euro would allow to support proposed projects appropriately. The budget per legal entity shall be limited to a maximum of 100,000 Euro in total within one or several proposals.</p> <p>Currently, SmartAgriHubs considers a total amount of up to 3,000,000 Euro funding for the overall SERVICE open call as appropriate.</p>
Eligible Costs:	<p>SmartAgriHubs is only funding eligible costs (e.g. excluding profits). Further details about eligible costs are provided in the Open Call Programme document.</p> <p>Financial support in the form of prizes is not funded by SmartAgriHubs but if relevant, appreciated to be covered by own sources or third-party funding or in-kind contributions.</p>
Funding Rates:	<p>Eligible costs can be funded up to a maximum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% for non-profit organisations (e.g. research) • 70% for project partners that are profit legal entities
Reimbursement:	<p>The reimbursement by SmartAgriHubs will be done on a lump sum basis. Therefore, the proposed projects need to be defined in terms of expected deliverables (e.g. finalised results), milestones (i.e. timing of activities) and KPIs (e.g. number of supported agri-food stakeholders, seize of supported innovation activities in terms of budget/effort/in-kind contribution, supported teams, attracted additional investors) – <u>see also Annex 2</u>.</p>
Evaluation Criteria:	<p>Proposals will be evaluated with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovativeness of Service Provision (weighting of 40%) • Added value of the service(s) for the DIH network (weighting of 40%) • Project Implementation (weighting of 20%)
Opening:	Wednesday, September 22 nd 2021
Closure:	<p>Wednesday, June 29th, 2022, 17:00 Brussels Time</p> <p>The open call will be closed at an earlier date in case the total budget that is reserved for this open call is completely allocated.</p> <p>If other open calls, with similar or deviating conditions, will be published by SmartAgriHubs, potential proposers can find related information on the SmartAgriHubs website.</p>
Selection of Proposals:	<p>Proposals can be submitted for evaluation until closure of the open call and will be evaluated in batches at regular points in time. The first date for evaluating a batch of proposals will be November 10th, 2021 (17:00 Brussels Time).</p> <p>Dates and time for additional evaluation of batches of submitted proposals will be communicated via the SmartAgriHubs website.</p> <p>All eligible proposals will be evaluated and those above the defined evaluation threshold will be selected for funding.</p>
Implementation:	<p>The work shall be implemented until October 2022 or before, for being able to take effect during the runtime of the SmartAgriHubs project and being able to reimburse related costs. However, proposed activities without financial contribution from SmartAgriHubs can also continue after October 2022.</p>

Annex 1 – Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation in the SmartAgriHubs SERVICE the NETWORK open call will be organised as single stage evaluation with the involvement of two experts evaluating the submitted proposal. The content of each proposal will be evaluated against the following weighted criteria.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Innovativeness of Service Provision	40%
Innovativeness of the approach for providing DIH innovation services and reuse of experience	30%
Suitability of the DIH's innovation strategy with the regional needs and the approach for service validation	10%
Added value of the service(s) for the DIH Network	40%
Proposed service portfolio and suitability with respect to the maturity self-assessment	30%
Targeted number of supported stakeholders and proposed amount of offered support; specifically planned number of involved farmers and/or agri-food end-users	10%
Project Implementation	20%
Competences of the team	10%
Suitability of project plan, budget and requested funding	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 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 average score of all criteria 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 update their proposals with respect to the evaluation comments as appropriate. If needed both parties will enter negotiations to agree upon a 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.

Annex 2 – Reimbursement and Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement

Every proposal needs to detail the individual budget plan. Generally, SmartAgriHubs will ask the consortia during the contracting phase and before Sub-Grant Agreement signature, to detail the allocation of resources, timetable, milestones and deliverables based upon a pre-defined template that will be an Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement. Key elements of the requested information that will be part of Annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement can be found below. The information in these tables shall also be provided together with the proposal (see Annex 3). Proposers need to decide, if additional details are required for being able to evaluate the proposal accordingly.

Budget Category	Planned Budget					Total
	Coordinator	Partner 2	Partner 3	...	Partner N	
1. Personnel costs ³						
2. Other direct costs (<i>travel, equipment, software, services, etc.</i>)						
3. Total direct costs (<i>Sum of row 1 & 2</i>)						
4. Indirect costs (<i>25% of Total direct costs</i>)						
5. Total costs (<i>Sum of row 3 and 4</i>)						
6. Funding requested ⁴ (max. 70 or 100%)						
Already SAH Beneficiary ⁵	No⁶	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	

³ All effort of the organisation in the team submitting a proposal should be listed here per involved organisation. The contract with SmartAgriHubs will be signed by one DIH (i.e. or by one organisation representing a DIH, in case this DIH is realised by a team of organisations) leading the proposed work that will distribute the payments to the involved organisations.

⁴ Depending on the nature of results and envisaged milestones, SmartAgriHubs considers providing an advance payment of 40% from the requested eligible max. funding. The remaining 60% would be reimbursed upon delivery of deliverables and accomplishment of milestones as contractually agreed. Usually realising a mid-term payment and a final payment after accomplishment of all working items and reporting.

⁵ The parties referred to as SmartAgriHubs beneficiaries are parties that signed the Grant Agreement No. 818182 or the Accession Form and accepted the grant and agree to implement it under their own responsibility and in accordance with the Agreement, with all the obligations and conditions it sets out.

⁶ The coordinator must not be a SmartAgriHubs beneficiary already.

No ⁷	Deliverable Name/Description ⁸	Type ⁹	Estimated Costs in Euro	Delivery Date ¹⁰
1				M# #
2				

No ¹¹	Milestones	Means of verification ¹²	Delivery Date
1			M# #
2	...		

⁷ Deliverable numbers in order of delivery dates.

⁸ Give a meaningful name, followed by a concise description.

⁹ Use one of the following codes:

R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

¹⁰ Measured in months from the project start date.

¹¹ Milestone numbers in order of delivery dates.

¹² Show how you will confirm that the milestone has been attained. Refer to indicators if appropriate.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Proposals shall help evaluators to understand the potential impact and value for money. Besides the textual description, proposals shall list the expected results (i.e. considered as indicators) that are representing the amount of offered services as well as foreseen involvement and support of additional parties that are not directly funded by SmartAgriHubs but would indirectly benefit by the consumption of innovation services.

Therefore, proposals shall include an overview of KPIs that are summarising the provided services (i.e. offering) and the envisaged consumption of these services (i.e. demand) representing the impact, as well as the related budget and resources to explain the value for money.

Table: **Example for a table**, highlighting the envisaged target outcome with KPIs. This shall provide an overview for the evaluators presenting the balance of funding requested and results to be provided.

No.	Target Outcome	Key Performance Indicator	Value
1	Offering a DIH Service Portfolio	# of offered Ecosystem Services ¹³	
		# of offered Technology and Adoption Services	
		# of offered Business Services	
2	Supported stakeholders, not directly funded by SAH	# of supported innovation activities with one or more partners	
		# of supported organisations	
		# of supported farmers & agri-food end-users	
		Expected investments, effort, in-kind contribution not funded by SmartAgriHubs	
3	Successful collaboration	Joint (virtual) events for experience exchange	
		Planned peer reviews with DIHs	

¹³ If you are providing existing as well as developing new DIH services, please provide the numbers for both. This applies to ecosystem, technology and business services.

Annex 3 – Template for SERVICE the NETWORK Proposals

To submit a proposal for the SERVICE the SmartAgriHubs Community Network Open Call, you need to prepare a description of your proposed work in English language that shall be submitted via the proposal management system. You can ask open call related questions by using the SmartAgriHubs forum (<https://forum.smartagrihubs.eu/>). A dedicated open call category is used for this purpose.

Format

Please prepare your proposal text as a pdf file, including the following content. Submitting a proposal that does not contain requested content can be considered as not eligible for evaluation and could be rejected without further evaluation.

Section	Content	Pages
Title Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of the call topic: "SERVICE the SmartAgriHubs Community Network Open Call" Title and Acronym of your proposal Name and webpage of the coordinating organisation Name, email, telephone number, and address of the contact person Date of preparation and version number 	1
Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstract (max. 200 words) Short description of the partnership – Coordinator and roles of the involved organisations. 	0.5 pages
LOI(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed letters of intent of consortium members 	One LOI per member
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanation of the overall idea of the proposal 	1-2 pages
DIH Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of the DIH services that shall be offered, detailing the approach how to deliver the services to stakeholders. Fit of the digital innovation strategy with regional needs and how to assure impact. Approach for service validation 	1-2 pages
Innovation Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of the agri-food stakeholders to be supported. Outlining the services that shall be provided and objectives to be achieved by the supported innovation activities. 	1-2 pages per major innovation activity
Collaboration & Synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border/cross-region collaboration (if applicable) Involvement of SmartAgriHubs project partners (if applicable) Intended reuse of experience provided by SAH or other stakeholders 	0.5-1 page
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview table of estimated KPIs (see Annex 2) 	0.5-1 page
Project Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timing of activities, milestones and related deliverables, adding an optional graphic to detail interdependencies. Tables for milestones and deliverables (see Annex 2) Budget planning and table summarising the budget (see Annex 2) 	2-3 pages

Section	Content	Pages
Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of partner organisation with website link Short description of the team, explaining the team strengths, including CVs of individual team members 	0.5-1 page per partner
DIH Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of the performed DIH innovation services maturity self-assessment(s) 	As generated by the tool
Declarations (see Annex 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaration for proposal submission signed by every proposer requesting funding from SmartAgriHubs SME Self-Declaration (only for SME type of organisations member of the proposal) 	0.5-1 page per proposer

It is up to you to decide on the most appropriate format for presenting your proposal: plain text, tables and/or graphical presentation. We recommend adding also one or more figures, presenting your proposal graphically with e.g. timing, offered services, supported innovation initiatives, additional mobilised stakeholders supported and expected results.

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

Any subsequent individual communication via email shall use the following subject:

- "SmartAgriHubs Proposal Submission – SERVICE the Community Network Open Call" – [Acronym of your proposal]"

Annex 4 – 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 four 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 form¹⁴ 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 2003¹⁵, declaring the following¹⁶:

- 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

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legEnt_privComp_en.pdf

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en

¹⁶ Please tick every box that applies.

Annex 5 – Examples for fundable Activities

Overview of potential DIH Services*

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	TECHNOLOGY AND ADOPTION SERVICES	BUSINESS SERVICES
<p>Community Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scouting and ecosystem analysis • Ecosystem building • Creating awareness • Brokerage • Dissemination <p>Strategy development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology road mapping • Market intelligence and market assessments • Technology watch and scouting <p>Eco-system learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops and seminars <p>Representation, promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing interests 	<p>Contract research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology concept development • Specific R&D • Proof of concept <p>Technical support on scale-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept validation • Prototyping <p>Provision of tech infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renting equipment • Platform technology infrastructure • Technology demonstrators 	<p>Incubator/accelerator and SME support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting SMEs and startups • Market assessment and "Voice of Customer" • Business development • Legal and Intellectual Property rights (IPR) • Innovative business modelling <p>Access to finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial engineering • Identification and connection to suitable funding sources • Investment plans <p>Project development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of opportunities • Creation of consortia • Development of proposals <p>Offering housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab facilities
<p>Plus: Other services – Overall Supporting Services</p>		

* This overview was prepared for the SmartAgriHubs "SERVICE Open Call" to provide specific examples of fundable activities. These services are further detailed in the [following table: DIH Services "THINK GLOBAL – ACT LOCAL"](#). Proposers could also propose other activities that might be considered for funding but would require explanation and need to add value.

DIH General Definition:

Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) are support organisations that aim to make businesses more competitive by speeding up and de-risking the development and uptake of digital innovations. They provide these services close to the end-users (“at working distance”) and thereby cater to the needs of agricultural producers and food processors in a specific region. Structurally, Digital Innovation Hubs maintain working relationships with a number of different stakeholders to form a “one-stop-shop where companies —especially SMEs, startups and mid-caps— can get access to technology-testing, financing advice, market intelligence and networking opportunities”. They develop and maintain the ‘ecosystem’ by collaborating with other organisations inside or outside the region that provide the knowledge, technology, infrastructure and facilities that underpin the technological transformation.

DIH Services “THINK GLOBAL – ACT LOCAL”

Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
Ecosystem services		
Community building	<p>Scouting and ecosystem analysis</p>	<p>DIHs often act as coordinators, connecting different stakeholders to support the digitisation of companies in the most optimal and efficient way. Core of these activities is to analyse the overall ecosystem in order to develop an overview of the demand for innovation and digital support among companies as well as other stakeholders in the ecosystem. This will enable the DIH to better support collaborations among actors and, if needed, address any unmet needs. This is about assessing the DIH landscape and in particular its borders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise focus groups to analyse the ecosystem. • Conduct a stakeholder analysis to develop an overview of local/regional demand and opportunities for digital innovation. • Make an overview of the local stakeholders and the services they can provide or contribute to. • Identify white spots – analysis of services that cannot be provided by the local digital innovation community (DIH network).

Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
Ecosystem building	<p>Once the assessment of a DIH and its surrounding landscape is completed, the task of actively scouting, connecting and attracting the relevant partner organisations begins. This service can be viewed as a horizontal effort that aims to establish an active and collaborative community which fosters the exchange of ideas and value (e.g. money or data) among the different stakeholders. For this, the DIH needs to establish links with various stakeholders. Bringing all the necessary partners into the DIH requires a considerable effort. Agreements need to be reached between partners (Memorandum of Understandings, contracts, etc.). Mechanisms and instruments for networking, linking partners and stakeholders need to be developed in order to build a vibrant and resilient community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize stakeholders for a consortium to develop projects. • Organize regular coordination meeting for members/stakeholders of the DIH network. • Develop and put in place a stakeholder strategy or plan; set up goals to achieve for the community expansion and engagement. • Organise launch event of the DIH or launch events of several products and services. • Match local/regional stakeholders' needs with potential partners, collaborators or support organisations from other regions.
Creating awareness	<p>Informing the broader stakeholder community and the general public in the region and other interested parties outside it about the DIH, its plans and the possibilities to engage. This is needed for successful establishment of the DIH. Raising the awareness among the ecosystem about opportunities of digitisation and innovative tech developments (see also ecosystem learning) is also important to generate interest and increase the 'client' base of the DIH. This includes activities such as participation in fairs, collaboration with sector associations and clusters, and promoting new opportunities with business development agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize farm demonstrations. • Develop leaflet, newsletter, or fiches on digital innovation. • Develop website or promote the DIH in well recognised websites. Fine tune the DIH profile in the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal. • Organise network events both at local, regional and national level. • Monitor interesting business opportunities for the DIH members; send regular updates in the form of email newsletters. • Collect and present good practices (e.g. EU projects) to local agricultural community to inspire for replication.

	Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
	Brokerage	Linking suppliers and users of technology is a key task for the DIH. It aims at speeding up the digital transformation process. It may involve a variety of activities: organising trade fairs, matchmaking, a help desk, and deploying specialised advisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize events to facilitate suppliers with potential tech users. Demonstrate ATN to be used for search of appropriate technologies and technology matchmaking. Brokerage of research activities, especially for arranging testing digital technologies in testing facilities.
	Dissemination	Information about plans, activities and results need to be widely disseminated. Sharing best practices and relevant use cases are key activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote best and good practices: Organizing workshops, informal gatherings and open day events (online and offline) for showcasing activities and results to various stakeholders. Attending expos, fairs, conferences or competitions to demonstrate good practices and advertise parties involved to a wider public. Social media communication about DIHs activities. Promotion of own events, workshops, conferences etc. as well as the ones from their community and stakeholders. Organise physical and online events for stakeholders on communication, best practices, and translation of results. Promote and disseminate DIH leaflet, newsletter, or fiches on results. Similar for products developed by their community. Share the profile created in the Innovation Portal on social media and announce it to the DIH community. Contribute with articles and interviews to the SmartAgriHubs newsletter; involve stakeholders in the newsletter to give them visibility at EU level. Develop dissemination strategies for the local/regional community or stakeholders.
Strategy development	Technology road mapping	The development of roadmaps for technologies is a key tool to set the strategic direction for technology development and reach agreement among partners in the DIH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop technology roadmaps and setting out technical strategies for local agricultural practices fitting local/regional needs, conditions and opportunities.

	Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
	Market intelligence and market assessments	Analysis of market developments and market studies to assess demand for products and services facilitating digitalisation, to underpin the business plan of the DIH, coping with the business opportunities of the digital innovation community. Market studies may focus on specific technologies, sectors or companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market analysis report with needs and opportunities for local farming community. • Assessment of specific technologies for business opportunities for local stakeholders.
	Technology watch and scouting	The DIH will assist companies in the region in identifying and assessing relevant new technologies. Sources can be technology providers in the region as well as from other regions or countries using the experience of other DIHs (see also brokerage). More generally, keeping track of developments in the key technologies relevant to the DIH is important. However, doing these technology foresight activities may be beyond the capacity of individual DIHs and may require support from specialised organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify relevant cutting-edge technologies relevant for local farming systems and keeping track of potential new solutions for particular groups of stakeholders/ farmers/ advisors/ cooperative groups/ etc. • Joint initiatives of several DIHs to identify and assess relevant technologies. • Develop technology foresight for local community (supported by specialized organization).
Eco-system learning	Workshops and seminars	The regular organisation of workshops and seminars to share information, knowledge, best practices and experiences. All to build a tight, vibrant and resilient innovation community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize education-like activities to develop and maintain the necessary ICT competences in the digital innovation community. • Organize workshops and seminars to share information on research, promising digital agri technologies, best and good practices, effective Competence Centres, etc. • Organize hackathon type of activities to mobilise talent and facilitating interdisciplinary learning, combining diverse types of stakeholders.

	Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
Representation, promotion	Representing interests	Advocacy activities aiming at externally promoting the interests of the ecosystem and the DIH during meetings with governments, companies, education institutes, etc. DIHs active with representation are also visible at conferences, (country) visits, roadshows, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise meetings with regional policy stakeholders, SMEs, companies, education institutes, etc. to raise awareness and explore collaboration opportunities. Develop event formats that reach beyond the local community, attracting collaboration with stakeholders on different levels. Develop policy recommendations for local government and policy.
Technology and adoption services			
	Technology concept development	Analysing stakeholders' infrastructure, needs and technological readiness, used for elaborating a technology concept, coping with their opportunities and threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform technology infrastructure analysis. Develop technology concepts as input for digital innovation activities. Identify test farms that can serve as demonstrators for specific technology concepts they tested before.
	Specific R&D	Specific R&D is often done at the request of companies or sector organisations and may include technology concept development and proof of concept development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify most appropriate research and development partners and develop plan for cooperation in R&D with them. Prepare proposal for applied research on specific local requirements or support others in this. Support research by mobilizing test farms.
	Proof of concept	Demonstrating the feasibility of a technological idea or concept and its potential for real-world application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate proof of concept, which would merit funding.
Technical support on scale-up	Concept validation	Once proof of concepts has been developed, they need to be validated with producers, preferably in their companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate involvement of farmers, agri businesses and other food chain stakeholders on validation for local conditions. Analysis of security, privacy and trust aspects of an envisaged digital innovation or of related hardware and software-based elements (e.g. realising a STRIDE analysis).
	Prototyping	Prototypes are production models that include the key design elements and technologies that can be shown to and discussed with (potential) customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate test of prototypes at local farms. Support the realisation of prototypes, but also mock-ups for the sake of reducing efforts and time required.

	Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
Provision of tech infrastructure	Renting equipment	Similarly, expensive equipment (e.g. for measuring and testing) is often underused by small producers or not affordable. Renting by the hour or for a specific task is thus an important service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse regional requirements for test and experimentation equipment.
	Platform technology infrastructure	Often inaccessible for individual producers, the DIH can provide platform infrastructure such as data sharing platforms, drones (for agriculture), or access to cloud services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide infrastructure to be used by local farmers and other stakeholders in the scope of innovation activities.
	Technology demonstrators	Proof-of-concept prototypes or examples of conceivable future systems that provide tangible examples, showcasing how new technologies can be implemented in different scenarios. The main purpose of these demonstrators is to show businesses the potential of new technologies. The demonstrators might be based on the existing facilities or labs with which the DIH cooperates; the products resulting from pre-competitive research; or it can be provided by private actors aiming to reach a larger public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate demonstration of prototypes at local farms or in the premises of the DIH.

Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
Business Services¹⁷		
Incubator/accelerator and SME support	<p>Supporting SMEs and startups</p> <p>Assistance in shaping producers' strategies and action plans with regard to digitisation and other critical areas of renewal (e.g. human-centred production and eco-friendly production). The support might also take the form of providing opportunities to meet other (successful) entrepreneurs, to participate in different trainings, or to provide information on possible incubators/accelerators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold business forums for the exchange of experiences. • Expert consultation on digitisation or internationalisation for local SMEs. • Provide training program on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New business opportunities within the framework of innovative agriculture, • Identification of technological challenges for agri-food companies, • Startup packages for startups, • Internationalisation strategy, or • Entrepreneurship. <p>More detailed services DIHs can provide to SMEs and startups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of market potential of a solution or startup idea. • Pitching/matchmaking events to investors/potential large customers. • Trainings for starting a business (process, business model, establishing a business legally, marketing your solution). • Business model trainings and consultancy. • Consultancy and assessment of digital maturity, needs and action plan preparation for farmers. • Support identifying future trends/needs of the agri sector (for the solution providers) and respectively identifying technology potential that could support the agri (to help farmers seeing opportunities). • Support preparing or providing feedback/comments on business model/plan.

¹⁷ NB: most fundable activities below can be summarised in hiring external parties; expert consultation; trainings; and acquisition + implementation of tools

Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
<p>Market assessment and "Voice of Customer"</p>	<p>Demand assessment related to a particular digital product or to the overall demand of the local market. This also relates to raising the awareness of a sector to the needs of the end-users as well as helping companies describe the benefits of their digital product in an understandable manner to the larger public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market research for a thorough market/customer needs assessment. • Acquire and implement a voice-of-the customer tool and program. • Acquire and implement platform tools for market/ consumer dialogues. • Local market assessment and potentially internationally. • Provide sector (agri) specific knowledge and support in the solution development stage. • Support identifying the needs of the agri-sector (articulating farmer challenges for technology/solution developers and establishing connections). • Awareness events (info days, demo days, trade fairs, days in universities). • Collection and translation of need for policy strategy. • Assessment of market regulations (e.g. safety of equipment, sales restrictions or channels and regulations).
<p>Business development</p>	<p>Identifying business opportunities, and developing business models for companies, such as Make, Buy or Lease decisions, and selling products as a service (servitisation), which is an ever more important business model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local stakeholders in business model development. • Participate in a training for the DIH itself, e.g. on developing new business. • Development/acquisition and implementation of a competitive intelligence tool focused on the identification of opportunities and new markets. • Consultation to explore how to market a solution and help them in identifying or connect to the customer segment.

	Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
	Legal and Intellectual Property rights (IPR)	These are key tasks that are difficult to manage by small producers and where the DIH can support either directly via its partners or by referring companies to the right sources of expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide legal expertise to identify possible IPR issues or opportunities for protecting a digital innovation in the scope of local/regional or international competition. • Provide legal expertise for advice to local stakeholders on the registration of trademarks. • Develop standardized IPR templates that can be provided in relation to the topics of the delivered DIH services. • Advice on collaboration agreements (e.g. use of Code of Conduct for data sharing).
	Innovative business modelling	Business models need to be adapted for the uptake of digital innovation. A market assessment and business model analysis need to be followed up by specific sales plans targeting customers and market segments, with a suitable value proposition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support on the adaptation of and implementation of innovative business models for digital technologies. • Search for market niches and create sales channels. • Support in identifying relevant platforms, marketplaces, distribution channels.
Access to finance	Financial engineering	This activity embodies the process of arranging different types of funding, in different amounts, for different purposes at different stages of the innovation process. This includes providing financial advice to SMEs and other producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert consultation on the possibilities of public and private financing. • Identification of funding opportunities for projects (e.g. catalogue with open calls). • Identification of local and regional funds for business development and specific funds to facilitate digital innovation. • Support on understanding/drafting application process for financial sources, open calls or vouchers (EU, national, regional and local).

Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
<p>Identification and connection to suitable funding sources</p>	<p>DIHs need to establish good relationships with public (regional, national, EU) and private funding sources (banks, venture capital, etc.) to ensure that the end-users get access to funding at the right time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic organisation of meetings with regional policy stakeholders, SMEs and private financial agents to raise awareness and explore collaboration. • Organise (hybrid) seminars on technology and financing options focusing on open and upcoming funding opportunities, and in parallel with partnering or brokerage events. • Develop a catalogue of funding agencies (public, private investors, business angels etc.) relevant for the local/regional community. • Prepare innovators to present their idea/plan for investors e.g. in pitch events. • Create, maintain and disseminate an agenda of matching events. • Identify stakeholders that have access to funding through various programs, therefore their efforts and expenses to obtain funding could be funded. • Advice on financial plans and applications (e.g. for banks or venture capitalists).
<p>Investment plans</p>	<p>DIHs support their customers / members in the development of bankable investment plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize trainings on how to make investment plans. • Support in drafting and feedback on investment plans of farmers or SMEs. • Templates and workshops/training on making a good investment plan.

	Activity	Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
Project development	Identification of opportunities	Based on their knowledge of supply and demand (i.e. technology offers, and company needs), DIHs identify new product development and investment opportunities. This also includes identification of future topics for collaborative research, as well as monitoring of RDI project calls (at EU, national or regional level). This might also involve the identification of opportunities for projects from private parties, e.g. matchmaking among large companies and startups to work on a specific collaborative project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify calls and mapping the local demands and opportunities. • Organize relevant network events. • Invest in cataloguing tools. • Develop a catalogue with relevant calls. • Aggregate catalogue with opportunities for calls. • Prepare a catalogue with local partners. • Prepare and maintain catalogue for finding partners in local ecosystem.
	Creation of consortia	Research, innovation and product development cannot be done by single stakeholders. Forming strong consortia of technology providers, users, financial institutions and government organisations is thus a key success factor for DIHs and their customers / members. Based on their links with the different stakeholders, DIHs can also add value by exploring and building strong consortia for the participation in project proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise workshops e.g. for the promotion of collaborative culture in innovation, in parallel with events on funding opportunities. • Expert consultation on legal forms for consortia. • Partner search for Innovation Activities. • Organise matchmaking events and sub-networks to identify partners, in parallel with events on funding opportunities. • Mentoring projects between partners for the creation of consortia.
	Development of proposals	Supporting the preparation of strong project proposals that can be accepted by funding organisations is a core task of the DIHs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of workshops aimed at SMEs for the successful preparation of the proposal. • Preparation of a guide for the preparation of project proposals. • Support proposal writing for EU/national calls¹⁸. • Provide training on writing a proposal.

¹⁸ This task is considered rather as a supporting activity for training teams to prepare successful proposals and supplementing the proposal preparation with core expertise. Organisations, only providing proposal preparation as external full-service delivery, without qualifying the teams aiming at digital transformation are not considered as DIHs.

Activity		Definition	Examples of Fundable Activities
Offering housing	Lab facilities	A DIH or one of its partners can provide R&D and testing facilities for companies that cannot afford their own labs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make laboratories, experimental farms, and other types of infrastructure available to be used by DIH stakeholders (e.g. startups and SMEs). • A retrofit of a location to facilitate testing and R&D centres focused on the needs of the local ecosystem that can be used collaboratively by SMEs. • Use of R&D and testing facilities: laboratories, experimental farms, demo farms and other infrastructure for Innovation Activities.
	Other services		
	Overall supporting services	To support the above-mentioned services, supporting services might be necessary to realize the portfolio of DIH services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and advertise DIH services. • Organize overarching events (virtual or in real life). • Develop and implement an organisational structure. • Develop and implement technical infrastructure. • Develop a business plan for DIH services. • Develop, and implement DIH services. • Test and validation of DIH services.