



Guidelines for Applicants

SmartAgriFood2/ICT-AGRI Joint Call

For transnational research, technological development and demonstration projects

Smart services and applications for the agri-food sector

Deadline for submitting full proposals:
Monday 1st December 2014

Draft version 2.0

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This draft is based on the SmartAgriFood2 application and initial discussions in ICT-AGRI. Modifications are to be expected after SmartAgriFood2 kick-off and after consultations among ICT-AGRI funding agencies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. A vision for an open marketplace for agricultural ICT

ICT products in the open marketplace are ready for immediate use by farmers throughout Europe. The Internet enabled marketplace takes care of contractual and financial relations between provider and user. The products are adapted to the local environment, including climate, language and agricultural practice.

The marketplace is implemented as an Internet platform with applications (ICT products) uploaded to it. Farmers access the products they subscribe to through the Internet. The ICT products in the marketplace share farm data in a secure and confidential manner. The ICT products connect to mobile as well as immobile installations in the farm and facilitate that data gathered by such installations are made available within the marketplace.

The ability of the marketplace to facilitate collaboration among ICT products is the key to its value. Farms are, not least when seen on a European scale, extremely disperse with regard to data, machines, installations, production conditions, language, etc. ICT products intended for general use are therefore designed to be modifiable by other products providing the local adaption.

1.2. The benefits for agriculture

European agriculture is facing severe challenges with regard to productivity, competitiveness and profitability, as well as demands to increase production with less environmental footprints. Intelligent machines, sensor networks, and smart ICT are seen as required ingredients for meeting these challenges. It seems, however, that the development of smart ICT is lagging behind the progress in intelligent machines and sensors; the lack of ICT tools suited for farm use is therefore a bottleneck.

The open marketplace as described above can provide a larger market for agricultural ICT products, and reduce the costs for local providers to adopt advanced ICT products for use by their customers. ICT to farmers are often bundled with advisory services or regulation authorities, and these organisations do usually have limited capacity to produce ICT. The open marketplace will provide a large market for professional ICT middleware products. The development needs for the direct distribution to farmers are then reduced to adaptors to appropriate ICT products in the marketplace. Similarly, machinery and sensor producers can provide adaptors for their products.

1.3. FI-PPP is paving the way

FI-PPP (Future Internet Public-Private Partnership) is a large EU funded initiative for improving European competitiveness within the rapidly growing market for Internet based applications. A large number of major European ICT companies have joined the partnership and contributed to the development of technologies for making it easier (in particular for SMEs) to develop advanced Internet applications.

FI-PPP is funding projects in three phases. In the first two phases the core technology has been developed. In addition specific technology has been developed and tested for several business areas, including agriculture. In one project a platform is developed with much of the functionality in the open marketplace described above. The third FI-PPP phase includes 16 so-called accelerator projects, each having about €4 million for calls for implementation projects by SMEs and web developers. Four of these target agriculture.

The call is a joint effort by the FI-PPP project SmartAgriFood2 and the ERA-NET project ICT-AGRI.

2. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE JOINT CALL

The overall aim is to boost the development of smart services and applications for the agri-food sector based on the technologies and services available from FI-PPP and marketed through an open marketplace for agricultural ICT.

The call combines funding and technological support from the SmartAgriFood2 FI-PPP project with funding and agricultural support from the ERA-NET ICT-AGRI. The two projects have similar and overlapping aims:

SmartAgriFood2 is focused on innovations in the use of services and applications building on FI-PPP outcomes in the agri-food sector. Proposals are expected to develop and demonstrate feasible solutions for the farming community, to raise wide spread awareness among ICT communities across Europe, and to engage relevant end users in participating in trials of the new services and applications (trials of each new service/app in at least 2 European regions). Also, proposals should develop the entrepreneurship potential of SMEs with successful prototypes and end user trials and support them in developing investor ready business models for commercial exploitation of their new services and applications.

ICT-AGRI is focused on innovations in the use of ICT and robotics in agriculture and agro-environment with regard to improving compatibility, incorporating third-party software in farm management systems, sharing essential data and supporting a rapid deployment of knowledge-based systems from agricultural research, as recommended in the ICT-AGRI Strategic Research Agenda of December 2012. It is also an aim to enable use of agricultural services and applications throughout Europe. ICT-AGRI considers the FI-PPP outcomes as important technologies for the implementation of the Research Agenda, and aims through this joint call to contribute to a fast uptake of the FI-PPP technologies in the agricultural community.

Projects funded by this call are expected to combine the application of advanced Internet technologies with the needs in the agri-food sector for a rapid progress in the use of ICT and automation in farm management and operations as well as business relations between farms and agri-food industry.

3. CALL PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE

The call involves a 1-phase procedure with an evaluation and selection of submitted proposals based on independent expert reviews of full proposals.

Table 1 presents the time schedule for the call and important deadlines.

Table 1 Call Schedule

Action	Scheduled
Call Opening	1 September 2014
Deadline for on-line submission of full-proposals	1 December 2014
Notifications letters and start of contract negotiation	15 January 2015
Start of projects	From 1 April 2015
End of projects	Before 1 September 2016

4. CALL TOPICS

Projects are expected to address one of three representative farming subsectors:

1. Arable Farming - large-scale, annual crop production in the open air. Typical examples are wheat, potatoes, rapeseed, etc.
2. Horticulture - flowers, fruits and vegetables production in greenhouses or, at a small scale, similar crops in the open air. In addition, orchards can be included. Typical examples are tomatoes, roses, cauliflower, carrots, grapes, olives, etc.
3. Livestock Farming – animal production in the open air closed housing systems or a mix between these. Typical examples are dairy cows, laying hens, pigs, etc.

Proposals are obliged to use FI PPP outcomes in the development of applications or services.

Outside of the use of FI PPP outcomes and the three target sectors, there will be no other technical/scientific limitations on the type of services/applications, which can be proposed by applicants. However to support the applicants, a comprehensive background document outlining the challenges faced at farm level will be prepared. This will also address the use case scenarios identified in SmartAgriFood1 and the use case trials addressed in FIspace as well as full details of all other Generic Enablers (GE's) available through FI-Lab and how these can be accessed and trialed by applicants thinking of proposing new applications.

5. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The projects will follow a milestone and mentoring programme. There are three major levels of the milestone programme:

1. Level 1 involves the development of a basic prototype of the new application or service based on the FI-Ware enabled FIspace platform.
2. Level 2 involves trialling these prototypes in end user test beds in a minimum of two different European countries.
3. Level 3 will end with the completion of investor ready business plans for successful SMEs and their presentation to investors for further funding.

Project progress against milestones will be reviewed (externally) and payments made on the basis of performance against these milestones. Projects who do not meet the key milestones will not progress to the next stage and not receive further funding, thus reducing the risk of wasted resources.

The maximum duration of projects is 18 months.

6. Who can participate and who can be funded

The funding in the call includes funding from SmartAgriFood2 and funding from ICT-AGRI funding agencies (ERA-NET participants and associated organisations). The funding from SmartAgriFood2 amounts to €4 million; the funding from ICT-AGRI are listed in Annex A.

There is unrestricted access for organisations and companies to participate without funding from the call (in kind funding). A significant contribution to the proposed project is required.

In the following the terms SAF2-applicant, ICT-AGRI-applicant, and IN-KIND-applicant are used.

Proposal consortia must include applicants from at least three countries. One and only one SAF2-applicant is required, while other applicants may be ICT-AGRI-applicants or IN-KIND-applicants.

SAF2-applicants are allowed to seek ICT-AGRI funding and provide in kind funding.

6.1. SmartAgriFood2 funding

SmartAgriFood2 funding is available for applicants from EU and EU associated countries. All categories of SMEs are eligible to be funded. Start-up participation will be encouraged as start-ups provide excellent potential to incorporate use of FI-PPP outcomes into their future business development and growth.

Eligible applicants include:

- Start-up SME (established under 1 year)
- Micro SME (under 10 employees)
- Established SME (see [EC SME definitions](#))

6.2. ICT-AGRI funding

The ICT-AGRI funding is open for applicants from EU and EU associated countries, but funding is restricted to applicants from the countries contributing to the call (see Annex A). Funding is subject to regulations of the funding agencies contributing to the call, including the types of organisations (e.g. public and/or private organisations).

7. Type of work to be funded

7.1. SmartAgriFood2 funding

- The majority of work to be funded will fall into the category of applied RTD i.e. research and development activities close to market (EC definition of RTD activities to be used). Eligible costs are expected to be personnel costs for the most part and other costs related to licensing, software development costs, etc.
- Other eligible costs outside of RTD related costs include costs related to set up/implementation of end user trial sites including equipment and cost related to business innovation support. SAF2-applicants are encouraged to partner with ICT-AGRI-applicants or IN-KIND-applicants, which will provide support and sites for field trials at level 2. However, if a SAF2-applicant is not able to find external funding for trial costs, then they will be allowed to make a provision for end user trial costs of up to 20% of level 2 budget.
- Travel costs should be an important component of all SME budget proposals – at least 10% of travel cost at each level (travel to meet international mentors/infrastructure advisor in Poznan/end user site locations/investors/innovation training/participation in dissemination events etc.)
- A small budget of 10% budget will be allowed to cover indirect costs. This will be applied on the basis of a flat rate based on direct eligible personnel costs.

Funding rates: 100% of costs. Funding is awarded at each level of project implementation subject to successful outcomes. Simplified direct cost remuneration system + 10% overheads.

7.2. ICT-AGRI funding

The majority of work to be funded will fall into the category of applied RTD, i.e. research and development activities close to market (EC definition of RTD activities to be used). Eligible costs are expected to be personnel costs for the most part and other costs related to licensing, software development costs, etc. The areas of eligible work include but are not restricted to

- Modifications and documentation of decision support systems and other knowledge based systems for enabling the systems to be implemented in smart applications or services.
- Modifications of data bases for enabling data sharing within an open marketplace for agricultural ICT
- Development of local adaptations of smart applications or services
- End user trials of smart applications or services

Funding rates and direct costs are subject to ICT-AGRI funding agency regulations.

8. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Application for funding is a one-stage procedure. Full proposals may be submitted as per the instructions below. Each consortium must identify a Consortium Coordinator, who will have a specific role during the submission process and throughout the project period if the project is funded (see 8.3).

8.1. Electronic Submission System

The Electronic Submission System (ESS) is located at www.ict-agri.eu. The ESS is combined with a partnering tool, which facilitates the establishment of a consortium prior to writing the application. All applicants need to be registered users in the ICT-AGRI website. Access to the ESS is via login to the website.

Privacy of the consortium and the application is guaranteed. The existence of consortia and applications is hidden for other website users, and unauthorized access to an application is prevented. Only in a matchmaking phase, the applicant can choose to have a public page for attracting other users to collaboration.

8.2. Project information (online)

The applicants must provide personal and company information, proposal title, acronym, summary and budget (including the source for funding). The proposal and the company is described in details in an annex structured by the below paragraphs, which also constitute the criteria for the evaluation.

1. Project title
2. Project acronym
3. Project summary

Technical papers and a short video pitch may be included to support the proposal.

8.3. Project partner information (online)

1. Personal information (name, affiliation, contact information)

2. Role in the project (coordinator/partner)
3. Company information
4. Contributions to the project
5. Experience relevant to the contributions (provide links to examples)
6. CV for key persons

8.4. Project partner budget (online)

Budget forms customised to SmartAgriFood2 or ICT-AGRI funding agency requirements and conditions are available in the ESS.

8.5. Description of work (uploaded pdf file)

The description of work of a maximum of 10 pages must be uploaded through the ESS. A template with the following paragraphs will be provided through the ESS.

1. The purpose of proposed application and its relevance for the intended users
2. The advantages of implementing the application by FI technologies
3. A technical description of the proposed application
4. Description of work in Level 1 (application prototype) and Level 2 (application tests)
5. Describe your success criteria for Milestone 1 (successful working application prototype)
6. Describe your success criteria for Milestone 2 (successful working application tests)
7. Business model: Establishment of the commercial potential by a simplified version of the Business Model Canvas (see Annex 3)

8.6. SUBMISSION OF FULL PROPOSALS

Full proposals must be submitted by activating the SUBMIT button in the ESS before 1st December 2014, at 13.00 CET.

Proposals that have been uploaded to the ESS without activating the SUBMIT button by the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

After the closure of the call, the Call Office will complete a check of the proposals. Proposals that are not complete or contrary to any formal requirement, will not be considered in the evaluation process. Only in exceptional circumstances, the applicant will be permitted to rectify the proposal.

9. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROPOSALS

9.1. Eligibility and relevance of project partners

SmartAgriFood2 evaluates the SAF2-applicants for eligibility for funding and relevance for the proposal. ICT-AGRI funding agencies evaluate ICT-AGRI-applicants for eligibility for funding according to given conditions, and evaluate the relevance for the proposal. IN-KIND-applicants are evaluated for relevance by an ICT-AGRI participant from the same country or by the Call Office.

The information from these evaluations is in the form of justified recommendations for approval of the proposed project. The information is passed on to the review panel and the decision forum.

9.2. Quality and ranking of proposed projects

Proposals are reviewed and prioritised by an independent expert review panel in relation to the criteria corresponding to the items described in section 9.2. Three experts including exploitation experts, FI-PPP experts, and agricultural experts will review each proposal. The review panel will develop a commented ranking of the proposals.

9.3. Funding decisions

The High Level Advisory Board including representatives for the ICT-AGRI funding agencies takes the decisions of funding. The decisions will respect the ranking produced by the Review Panel as far as possible taking the restrictions incurred by ICT-AGRI funding being bound to national applicants into account. The decisions may be conditioned on recommended changes of proposals to be effectuated during project negotiations.

10. OUT-COME OF THE EVALUATION OF FULL PROPOSALS

The Call Office will contact each SME of a submitted full proposal to inform them of the outcome of the selection during March 2015. The Consortium Coordinators of the project full proposals selected by the Funders Group will be invited for negotiations on a milestone and implementation plan. A customised mentoring programme will be developed for each shortlisted SME applicant and a team of technology, academic and business support specialists will be put in place (depending on individual SME requirements) to ensure that the new applications developed build on the most recent academic knowledge available, on the most recent developments of the FIspace platform, on the results from the large scale user trials undertaken in Phase 2 projects and using the FI-WARE generic enablers. Specifically, a lead mentor (from partner organisation) will be assigned to each SME. There will be negotiation of a SME Milestone Support Programme for each SME and the identified milestones will be linked to payments as well as the milestone based performance will be reflected in the signed contract.

11. DISSEMINATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Funded projects are required to develop a consortium agreement, which includes handling of intellectual property rights. Applicants are encouraged to identify, exploit and, where appropriate, protect intellectual property (IP), with a view to maximising socio-economic benefits.

The project outcomes should be disseminated to stakeholders through appropriate publications, subject to prior consideration of the protection of IP by the owning institution.

12. ETHICS

Work involving the use of animals or humans should be carried out under the appropriate authorisation taking into account local ethical requirements. Any proposal, which appears to the funding organisation or designated reviewers to contravene fundamental ethical principles, shall not be selected, and may be excluded from the evaluation and selection procedure at any time. Judgement of the significance of ethical issues will be made using the criteria published by the Commission in the guidelines for the 7th Framework Programme (ec.europa.eu/research/scienc society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.topic&id=370).

Annex 1 SmartAgriFood2 distribution of funding & funding rates:

Funding is awarded at each level of project implementation subject to successful outcomes. Level 1 costs Simplified direct cost remuneration system + 10% overheads.

Level	Maximum Funding rate	Maximum funding amount from SAF2	Reporting required	Payment criteria	Approx. Payment date
Level 1: Development of a basic prototype of the new application or service	100%	€35,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • Cost statement. Prototype validation by mentor/HLAB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% Prepayment on contract signature • 60% remuneration of cost statement following approval by mentor/HLAB 	
Level 2: End user test beds	75%	€40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost statement. • Report on end user trials completed approved by mentor/HLAB • Evidence of complimentary funding (e.g. from ICT Agri Call 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% remuneration of cost statement following approval by mentor/HLAB 	
Level 3: Business plan completion	50%	€20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost statement. • Approval of business plans completed approved by mentor/HLAB • Evidence of complimentary funding (e.g. from regional support instruments/ private investors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% remuneration of cost statement following approval by mentor/HLAB 	

Annex 2 ICT-AGRI funding agencies and funding

To come

Annex 3 Business Model Canvas



Lean Canvas is adapted from The Business Model Canvas (<http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com>) and is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.