WHITE-LABEL SHOP FOR DIGITAL INTELLIGENT ASSISTANCE AND HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION IN MANUFACTURING

WASABI 2ND OPEN CALL FOR EXPERIMENTS
Frequently Asked Questions document

CONTENT

1 INTRODUCTION

The present document provides a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers related to the WASABI Open Call 2. 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 WASABI submission platform (https://wasabi.ems-innovalia.org/).

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 What is WASABI?

WASABI helps small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) improve workforce performance by providing digital tools, especially conversational digital assistants. These assistants make complex software easier to use and support better decision-making on the factory floor.

WASABI also offers a white-label marketplace based on PrestaShop (an open-source e-commerce platform), where developed digital assistants and AI "skills" can be shared and reused by other SMEs.

2.2 What are the goals of the WASABI 2nd Open Call?

The 2ⁿᵈ Open Call support SME-led experiments that develop and test AI-based digital assistance experiments in the manufacturing sector.

The call aims to improve the sustainability of processes and products, make industrial processes more agile, and make manufacturing jobs more attractive for workers through improved human-machine interfaces and more intuitive interaction with digital tools.

2.3 What is a Digital Assistant?

A Digital Assistant (DA) is AI software that helps users complete complex or repetitive tasks through natural conversation—by text or voice.

Within the WASABI context, therefore it is expected that applicants develop practical, scalable, and user-friendly AI assistants that:

- Simplify complex industrial tasks
- Improve decision-making
- Enhance collaboration between humans and machines
- Support digital transformation in manufacturing

2.4 Are specific sectors targeted?

Yes. The Open Call targets **all manufacturing sectors,** including (but not limited to) waste management, workforce management, and quality assurance.

3 ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Who can apply?

Applicants must form a consortium of 2 or 3 legal entities, including:

- **At least one SME from the manufacturing sector** (mandatory)
- **At least one Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) or European DIH (EDIH)** (mandatory).
- A third partner, typically an IT solution provider, if the SME lacks sufficient in-house IT expertise or requires additional technical support (optional).

3.2 What qualifies as an SME?

An SME (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) is defined according to the EU criteria as an enterprise that employs fewer than 250 persons and has an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

This definition applies to all SME participants, including both the manufacturing SME and any optional third partner.

3.3 What are the geographical eligibility requirements?

All consortium members must be legal entities established in one of the following countries:

- o the **Member States of the European Union** (EU-27);
- o the **Horizon Europe Associated Countries**, as listed in the official Horizon Europe document "*List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe*" (version 2.4 – 15.01.2023).[1]

Entities based outside these countries are not eligible to apply or participate.

3.4 Can an individual apply?

No, **individuals are not eligible to apply**.

Only legal entities—such as SMEs, DIHs, or IT providers—organized into eligible consortia may submit proposals to the WASABI Open Call.

---

[1] *Entities established in associated countries are eligible for funding only if the Horizon Europe association agreement with their respective country of establishment is applicable at the time of signature of the WASABI Grant Agreement (i.e., February 2023).*

3.5 Can WASABI partners apply to the call?

No. Current **WASABI project partners are not eligible to apply**.

Any proposal involving them will be automatically disqualified.

4 CONSORTIUM COMPOSITION

4.1 What is the required composition of a consortium?

To be eligible, each consortium must include:

- At least one SME from the manufacturing sector, and
- One Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) or European DIH (EDIH)

An optional third partner (e.g., an IT solution provider) may be included if the SME lacks in-house IT expertise or requires additional technical support. This partner must:

- Provide relevant IT or technical expertise, and
- Be an SME (Small or Medium-sized Enterprise), in line with EU SME criteria.

Therefore, consortia must have **between 2 and 3 partners**.

4.2 Are consortia mandatory to apply?

Yes. **Only consortia are eligible to apply** for the WASABI Open Call.

Individual applicants or single organizations are not eligible.

4.3 Can an organization be involved in multiple proposals?

Yes. An organization—whether an SME or a DIH—may participate in multiple proposals.

However, if selected in more than one winning consortium, it will only be eligible to receive funding for one project. In such a case, the organization must choose which project to proceed with.

5 FUNDING AND SUPPORT

5.1 What is the total budget for the 2nd Open Call?

The **total funding allocated for the 2nd Open Call is €1.522.250,00**. Funding will be awarded to selected consortia until the total budget is fully allocated.

5.2 How many consortia will be funded?

The 2nd Open Call aims to fund at least 10 consortia, subject to the final distribution of the available budget.

5.3 How will the budget be allocated?

Funding will be provided under a **Lump Sum model**, which simplifies financial reporting.

Key points include:

- The maximum funding per experiment is €125,000
- Each partner may receive up to €60,000
- At least 85% of the funding must be allocated to SMEs
- Each partner must clearly present its share of the budget in the application
- All budgeted costs must be directly related to the execution of the experiment

5.4 What is a Lump Sum funding model?

The Lump Sum funding model is a simplified payment method used in EU-funded projects that allows beneficiaries to receive fixed payments based on a pre-approved work plan and budget.

As long as WASABIS's project objectives are met and deliverables are accepted, detailed cost reporting is required.

This approach helps reduce administrative work and makes financial management easier for participants.

5.5 Is co-financing required?

Yes. Co-financing is required.

For-**profit entities such as SMEs are required to provide 40% co-financing**, as the EU covers **60%** of eligible costs.

In contrast, **non-profit entities such as DIHs or EDIHs, are eligible for 100%** funding with no co-financing required.

This funding structure ensures inclusive participation while supporting financial sustainability.

5.6 How will the funding be distributed under the 2nd Open Call?

Funding will be distributed in three instalments:

- **25%** after approval of the initial deliverables (approximately Month 2)
- **50%** after the individual monitoring meeting in M7
- **25%** after completion of the experiment and final approval of all deliverables linked to WASABI through the contract at M12)

6 APPLICATION PROCESS

6.1 How should applications be submitted?

Applicants must submit their proposals via the WASABI EMS platform by following these steps:

1. Register on the WASABI EMS platform,
2. Select "New Proposal," and provide the required project information (title, acronym, keywords).
3. Upload the proposal document (PDF format, maximum 20 MB) under the "Annexes" section.

Upon submission, the system will provide a confirmation email.

6.2 What documents are required?

Applicants are required to submit a 10-page proposal structured as follows:

- Technical Excellence (up to 4 pages)
- Impact (up to 2 pages)
- Implementation (up to 4 pages)

The document must comply with the following formatting guidelines:

- Font: Arial, size 11 pt
- File type: PDF
- Maximum file size: 20 MB

6.3 What is the application deadline?

The **deadline for the submission is 9ᵗʰ October 2025**, 17:00 CEST.

Submissions received after this deadline will not be considered.

6.4 Can proposals be edited after submission?

Yes. Proposals may be updated and resubmitted at any time before the deadline.

Only the last submitted version will be considered for evaluation.

7 EVALUATION PROCESS

7.1 What are the evaluation criteria?

Proposals are evaluated based on **Technical Excellence**, **Impact**, and **Implementation**. Technical Excellence looks at innovation, alignment with WASABI goals, and use of DIA technologies. Impact assesses benefits to the SME, replicability, and exploitation strategy. Implementation covers the quality of the work plan, budget, and team expertise. Proposals must meet minimum score thresholds to be considered for funding.

7.2 Who evaluates the proposals?

Each proposal is reviewed by two experts—one internal from the WASABI consortium and one external independent evaluator.

All evaluators are required to sign confidentiality and conflict-of-interest declarations to ensure a fair, impartial, and transparent evaluation process.

7.3 When will applicants be informed of the results?

Applicants will be notified of the evaluation outcome once the evaluation process is completed. Each applicant will receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)containing the final scores and comments from evaluators, regardless of whether the proposal is selected for funding.

8 EXECUTION OF THE SELECTED EXPERIMENTS?

8.1 What is expected from selected experiments?

Each selected consortium must carry out an applied experiment that integrates a Digital Intelligent Assistant (DIA) into a real-world manufacturing context. The project must include the development of a task-oriented OVOS skill, its deployment using the WASABI-provided Docker Compose stack, and the creation of a WASABI White Label Shop (WWLS) to distribute the developed skill.

The DIA should support human-machine collaboration through natural language interaction (voice or text), simplify complex workflows, and demonstrate value to the SME. Experiments are expected to produce working prototypes—not just concepts—accompanied by high-quality documentation and a public demonstration.

8.2 What are the main technical tasks to be carried out by selected experiments?

Selected experiments are expected to develop and deploy of a Digital Intelligent Assistant (DIA) that address a specific challenge in manufacturing.

To build the DIA, selected experiments must:

- Use the OVOS framework and the Docker Compose project for OVOS.

Optionally, experiments may enhance or customise the DIA by integrating additional components such as RASA, WISE, PREVENTION, DocuBoT and rEUse Platform.:

In addition, each experiment must:

- Set up a WASABI White Label Shop (WWLS) using PrestaShop to distribute the developed skill.

Marketplace functionality can be optionally extended with the Federation Module and the NFT Royalty Module.

8.3 What are the required activities and deliverables?

Selected experiments are also expected to:

- Prepare required deliverables, including the IPR Plan, Experiment Handbook, Demonstration, and Cost Statement
- Participate in mandatory meetings (kick-off, monitoring, final event)
- Actively contribute to dissemination and knowledge-sharing through WASABI channels

8.4 What is the expected duration of each experiment?

Each **experiment will run for 12 months**, starting from the kick-off meeting

8.5 Are experiments expected to be fully functional or more like prototypes?

Selected experiments are expected to deliver a working prototype that demonstrates the developed skill integrated into the WASABI ecosystem. While full commercial deployment is not required, the prototype must be functional, tested in a relevant manufacturing environment, and accompanied by comprehensive documentation and a final demonstration showcasing its capabilities and usability.

8.6 What type of technical assistance can experiment teams expect from the WASABI consortium?

The WASABI consortium offers targeted technical support to help experiment teams overcome challenges and ensure successful execution of their projects. Support will be aligned with the key activities expected in each experiment and delivered through the following methods:

- **Webinars and workshops** introducing key components and practical deployment guidance;
- **Helpdesk support** via email, ticketing systems, or dedicated channels for remote assistance;
- **1:1 technical mentoring** through Microsoft Teams for support with component deployment and integration;
- **Documentation and manuals** covering installation, usage, and best practices;
- **Video tutorials** that explain core functionalities and use-case examples.

9 CONTACT AND INFORMATION

9.1 Where can I get help or additional information?

If you need technical assistance with submitting your application via the EMS platform, please email: wasabi_opencall@innovalia.org.

For general information or clarifications about the call itself, the same email address can be used: wasabi_opencall@innovalia.org.

9.2 How choose and contact a DIH/EDIH?

As mentioned in the guide, for a correct application it is necessary to involve a Digital Innovation Hub (DIH/EDIH). The EDIH/DIH can cover any type of role and there are no restrictions of any kind regarding geographical borders or the sector in which the hub is mostly involved.

Applicants can access the complete list of EDIHs at the following link: https://european-digital-innovation-hubs.ec.europa.eu/edih-catalogue?f%5B0%5D=edih_soe%3Aedih&f%5B1%5D=edih_soe%3Asoe.

5 criteria are provided to search for the DIH/EDIH that best suits your needs, and for each of them a telephone and email contact is provided.

In this respect, it is recommended that the applicant contacts the EDIH that is closest to them, as these organizations have a strong regional focus and are familiar with the environment and their needs.

To contact them, the SME (applicant) can explain their interest in applying to the WASABI Open Call and that to do so, they require collaboration with an EDIH. In this line, the applicant could propose to have a short call in which they present their needs and discuss how the EDIH can support the SME.