

Open Call for Ambassadors

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1 Abstract

The aim of AIRISE project is to accelerate the uptake of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the context of manufacturing throughout the European Union. AIRISE is generating awareness and offering services that support SMEs in this uptake by means of assessing challenges, creating implementation concepts, recommending tools and running experiments and is creating offerings to provide impartial access to the best European AI knowledge and resources to support this adoption.

To meet the targets laid out, AIRISE aims to engage external “AIRISE Ambassadors”. Ambassadors are legal entities, represented by one or more of their staff, that support AIRISE in promoting its ambition, creating awareness on AI in manufacturing and performing AI application screening among SMEs according to the activities and conditions set up in this guide for AIRISE Ambassadors. The goal is to create awareness and facilitate the assessment of potential AI application ideas for a wide SME base. AIRISE will empower these entities with the knowledge, tools and financial support to address a wide basis of manufacturing SMEs. This document summarizes the process and conditions applicable for becoming an AIRISE Ambassador.

AIRISE is co-funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101092312. Further information about AIRISE is available through the project website (<https://www.airise.eu>) and CORDIS portal.

2 Call Aim and Topic

AIRISE aims to drive the use of artificial intelligence on the shop floor of manufacturing companies throughout the European Union. A team of experts from renowned technology transfer organisations will support experimentation with individual ideas of small and medium-sized enterprises for enhancement and optimisation of their manufacturing operations.

The AIRISE team calls for support to achieve this objective. We search for organisations (legal entities) that bring together SMEs and/or provides those SMEs with capacity-building & business-related services from specific industrial sectors or with a specific interest, such as SME clusters, technological associations or business registers, to act as “AIRISE Ambassadors”. The idea behind this call is to upskill the mentioned organisations, enabling them to bring in AI basics and potential to their SME members.

AIRISE will facilitate this by providing an overview of the project (opportunities, services and workflow) as well as by training the organisations’ employees on basic screening of AI applications for manufacturing. This “train-the-trainers” approach will create an entry level understanding of AI application success factors, required efforts, and identification of potential impacts. After the training, the organisations will be able to reach out to SMEs and present them basics about AI applications in manufacturing, as well as to have 1:1 discussion with SMEs’ or midcaps’ staff to screen their AI ideas.

Overall, the call aims to empower AIRISE Ambassadors as a whole, to reach out to a large number of SMEs (>1500) and screen >500 application ideas throughout the project duration.

If you represent such an organisation, you can apply for in-kind and financial support through AIRISE.

2.1 Your expected contributions

Applying legal entities that are selected are expected to contribute the following:

- Appoint 1-2 people for upskilling on the topic of AI-in-manufacturing by receiving a 2-day training from AIRISE.
- Reach out to SMEs, inform them about AIRISE and discuss potential applications of AI-in-manufacturing.
- Screen application ideas of your SME members with the help of the AIRISE screening tools for AI-in-manufacturing.

2.2 Your benefits

In return, you are going to receive the following benefits:

- Step into the world of AI in manufacturing.
- Receive 2 days of training by the AIRISE experts on AI applications in manufacturing.
- Access to the AIRISE pack of materials – the ultimate checklist for guiding manufacturing SMEs in AI application.
- Drive a community of SMEs pioneering AI applications in your network.
- Expand the portfolio of competences and services to existing and new members by adding AI.
- Increase your organisation attractiveness by becoming a recognisable instigator of AI applications in the sector.
- Expand the access to new funding opportunities for your SMEs at EU level.
- Receive financial support for the engagement in the activities.

2.3 Benefits to your SMEs

Immediate benefits to your SMEs:

- Support in explicitly formulating their own problem/challenges in relation to AI in manufacturing for their businesses.
- Support by performing their requirements analysis (needs, how to apply AI in manufacturing).
- Assess their ideas regarding application of AI in manufacturing and assist them in understanding the possibilities.
- Provide insights in the business implications/aspects for AI solutions in manufacturing.
- Build valuable relationships; become part of a network and community of partners that can support implementation of AI solutions in manufacturing.

Extra benefits your SMEs will be achieving if further liaising with AIRISE:

- Identify an individualised implementation roadmap.
- Receive tailored technical support in developing and deploying AI solutions through partners' expert services provision.
- Access to up to 60k€ of funding to deploy and test AI solutions in your shop floor.
- Upskill, training & capacity building for SMEs.
- Promotion and visibility based on EU-level innovation activities involvement.
- Practical experience on AI-in-manufacturing from an expert guided experiment.
- Opportunity to further scale up AI applications on your shop floor.

3 Conditions and Eligibility

3.1 Eligibility requirements and financial limitations

Applicable requirements and limitations are in line with Grant Agreement n°101092312 signed by the AIRISE partners and the European Commission. The actual support is provided on the basis of Annex K of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement through Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP).

3.1.1 Organisations which may receive financial support (FSTP)

Financial support may be provided to organisations that are legally recognised (have 'legal personality') and have a validated PIC number. Any legal entity that applies for financial support needs to represent or serve a group of manufacturing SMEs in the development of their manufacturing business at European scale. Research and technology development organisations are not eligible, nor AIRISE consortium members.

3.1.2 Activities for which a third party may receive financial support

The AIRISE Ambassadors may receive financial support for personnel resources and consumables to get trained and to implement reach out and screening activities that will prepare an assessment of an application case. Elements of such reach out and screening activities will be facilitated by material provided from the AIRISE project.

3.1.3 Criteria for calculating the exact amount of the financial support

The exact amount of the maximum financial support will be calculated on the basis of the cost that is specified by the third parties. Each party has to provide personnel direct cost (without overhead) and the planned effort. Each party has to specify other costs such as consumables and travel costs if applicable (but kept to a minimum). Equipment (depreciation) will not be funded. Based on the appropriateness of the given cost that is judged by the evaluators and the consortium, a lump sum for the support is being calculated from 70% of the total cost (direct cost plus 25% flat rate to cover overhead cost). This lump sum will be paid in separate instalments that are connected to the achievements of KPIs as defined in this guide, Section 4.4.

To ensure efficient implementation of the activities, the following is considered as a reasonable baseline:

- Funding: 30.000EUR
- KPI 1: 150 SMEs reached
- KPI 2: 50 AI ideas assessed

These are just an indication of what the AIRISE consortium would believe to be an efficient implementation; applicants can adjust these values accordingly.

3.1.4 Maximum amount to be granted to each entity

No single entity may receive more than 30k€ from the AIRISE consortium per call unless it is necessary to achieve the objectives of the action.

3.2 Criteria for awarding financial support

The applications received will be evaluated against four criteria.

#	Name and Explanation	Weight / Threshold
1	Impact and the anticipated result: The concept for reach out activities needs to show the number of SMEs that will be reached by which activity. Sector specific measures need to maximise the number of SMEs that will go for an assessment. Applicants should explicitly mention the target for 2 KPIs, as well as how these will be achieved: KPI 1: Number of SMEs reached KPI 2: Number of assessments conducted	Weight 1 Threshold 3/5
2	Quality and efficiency of the implementation: The proposed work plan needs to explain the planned actions measures to prevent or mitigate occurrence of risks. Resources need to be realistic with respect to amount and timing.	Weight 1 Threshold 3/5
3	Relevance to manufacturing in Europe: The organisations to be addressed need to have a clear European scope.	Weight 1 Threshold 3/5

The selection of the applications will be realised in a two-step process. Step 1 will involve two senior business developers from the project's SME organisations. They will evaluate applications against the selection criteria and provide a prioritised list of applications that achieved the overall threshold for all criteria. Each criterion will be scored with the following scale (half points are allowed):

- 0: The application fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information
- 1 (Poor): The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses

- 2 (Fair): While the application broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses;
- 3 (Good): The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary
- 4 (Very good): The application addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible
- 5 (Excellent): The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.

Applications which fail to achieve a score of at least 3 for any of the criteria cannot be funded (score threshold), all other applications are taken to Step 2.

Step 2 will involve the consortium partners to prioritise the applications based on the evaluation result, the expected impact, the project resources and coverage of the objectives of the project in general. The consortium will justify any deviations between the final ranked list and the ranked list after Step 1. Funding is then awarded to the most highly prioritised applications.

3.3 Publication

The open call will be published on the AIRISE website and will remain open until the end of 2023, with specific cut-off dates. It will be communicated through social media and on the web page of the Commission. The primary source for documents remains at the URL of the AIRISE website (www.airise.eu).

3.4 Reimbursement of application preparation

Expenses incurred in the preparation and submission of the applications will not be reimbursed.

4 Application Submission

Project Acronym	AIRISE
Project GA#	101092312
Project full name	Artificial Intelligence for resilience in manufacturing SMEs
Call Identifier	AIRISE OCA1
Call Title	AIRISE Open Call for Ambassadors
Publication Date	01. June 2023
Cut-off dates	31. July 2023 17:00 Brussels Local Time 31. October 2023 17:00 Brussels Local Time
Expected Duration	12 months
Total Budget	120.000 Euros
Maximum amount of financial support per legal entity	30.000 Euros
Eligibility	See guide for AIRISE Ambassadors
Proposal language	English (UK or US)
Proposal content	One application per legal entity. Content and structure should be based on the template addressing the topics detailed in this guide.
Submission	Through the website www.airise.eu/calls
Questions	ambassadors@airise.eu

4.1 Communications and Data Processing

The mail account is handled by the project's office team. The identity of the sender and the content of the application will be treated confidentially within the consortium. The application document will be stored on a collaboration platform where only consortium members have access.

Any questions concerning this call shall be submitted in writing not later than 3 days before the cut-off dates to ambassadors@airise.eu. Questions shall make specific reference to the appropriate section(s) of this document. Questions received via ambassadors@airise.eu may be published on the AIRISE web site.

4.2 Submission and evaluation

In order to apply for this call, applicants need to submit an application that contains information according to the requirements listed in this guide. The responsibility for

a successful and timely reception remains with the applicants. Applications arriving after the closing date and time will not be taken into consideration. After evaluation, the submitting entity will be informed of the result of their applications' evaluation by e-mail.

AIRISE will offer submission through its website. Submissions by other means will not be taken into consideration.

4.3 Contractual conditions

All legal entities selected will sign a contract with the coordinator of the project, with a duration of 12 months. Legal entities that are selected for funding become a Third Party of the consortium using Cascade Funding (also known as sub-granting).

Subgrantees must comply with the rules and the principles mentioned in Section I, Article 6 (Eligible and ineligible costs) of the Grant Agreement (for information see Horizon Europe AMGA – Annotated Model Grant Agreement in its' latest version, even if it is in draft status) in the same way as the beneficiaries of the AIRISE project. The rules concerning eligibility of costs, identification of direct and indirect costs and upper funding limits can be found in the Horizon Europe AMGA.

The beneficiary of the EU grant must ensure that the recipients of the financial support allow the Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient's premises (see ruling in AMGA).

Beneficiaries need to declare their lack of any conflict of interest with AIRISE partners. This will ensure to prevent any situation where the impartiality and objectivity of the awarding action is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ("conflict of interest"). Applicants who cannot declare this will not be awarded.

4.4 Payment scheme for applicants

To ensure efficient implementation of the action and minimize risk, the following payment plan will be followed:

Payment %	Condition
30%	Approval of the application (pre-payment)
30%	After approval of the midterm report, submitted on M6. At least 50% of the agreed KPIs achieved and proof delivered.
40%	After approval of the final report, submitted on M12. At least 100% of the agreed KPIs achieved and proof delivered.

The AIRISE consortium has the right to terminate the contract before completion, and without proceeding further outstanding payments in case of not achieving the agreed KPIs as expected.