



OPEN CALL 2 – GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Call Information

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Project full name	: Embodied AI/Robotics Applications for a Safe, Human, Industry
Acronym	: EARASHI
Grant Agreement N°	: 101069994
Deadline	: 20.12.2023, 5 pm (CET)

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Closing date for EARASHI 2nd Open Call: 20.12.2023, 5pm (Brussels Time)

Important: EARASHI second open call is the last one.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Extended nomenclature
AE	Application Experiment
BB	Building Block
CF	Cascade Funding
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Party
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
SOM	Size of Market
UVP	Unique Value Proposition

SHORT DESCRIPTION

The Guide for Applicants offers guidance for preparing a proposal for submission to EARASHI Open Calls. It provides an introduction to how to structure your proposal. It also describes how the proposal should be submitted, and the criteria on which it will be evaluated.

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

The Application Experiment (AE) Guide for Applicants contains the basic information needed to guide you in preparing a proposal for submission to EARASHI AE Open Call. It gives an introduction to how to structure your proposal. It also describes how to submit the proposal and the evaluation criteria.

Please note:

Every selected applicant will be required to sign a Standard AE Agreement, a model example of which can be found on EARASHI website at <http://earashi.eu/open-calls/>.

EARASHI Guide for Applicants does not supersede the rules and conditions laid out by European institutions' decisions relevant to the HORIZON EUROPE framework programme.

EARASHI consortium brings together



- CEA-Leti, France
- Flanders Make, Belgium
- AMS Belgium, Belgium
- Mondragon, Spain
- INEGI, Portugal
- Ikerlan S Coop, Spain
- Minalogic Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France
- ST Microelectronics, France
- CECIMO, Belgium
- Blumorpho, France
- Steinbeis Innovation, Germany
- Aldakin, Spain

2 SCOPE OF EARASHI OPEN CALL#2

EARASHI, Embodied AI/Robotics Applications for a Safe, Human-oriented Industry, aims at **improving working conditions, trust, and acceptance of collaborative embodied AI in robotic systems**, for the **production machines/tools sector**. His outcomes are expected to help employees in their daily activities and

improve their working conditions, leading to a productivity increase. A **worker-centric approach** by considering workforce well-being and health (e.g., MSD and stress), design thinking methodology of production machines, worker acceptance, and ethics.

The R&D demonstration projects targeting EARASHI challenges are expected to reach Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 7 starting from TRL 4-5, following a competitive based approach.

The demonstration projects will target EARASHI challenges (complete list of challenges available at <https://earashi.eu/open-calls/>), and respecting EARASHI scope, e.g.:

- **Support the industry** in the uptake of advanced digital eco-responsible technologies (in particular AI, Data and Robotics)
- **Support workers in their daily activities and improve their working conditions** (safety, health and well-being) leading to a productivity increase
- Adopt a **worker-centric approach** by considering worker well-being and health at work (e.g. MSD and stress), design thinking methodology of production machines, worker acceptance and Ethics
- Target the **machine tool / production machine / manufacturing industry** application.

The granted projects are expected to have impact on:

- Decrease of the number of workers that perceive stress at work / the number of accidents at work / number of workers already suffering from MSD
- Increase of the number of ROS-users
- Improvement of trust in AI, Data and Robotics (implementation of ADR in manufacturing)
- Machine retrofit and refurbishment
- Deployment of eco-design approach
- Standardized, easy, non-hazardous dismantling processes shortened in time and costs.

Pan-European demonstration projects (EU member states or Horizon Europe associated countries are strongly encouraged, through the cross-border collaboration:

- With EARASHI partners providing the technical building blocks and expertise
- Through the companies building up the proposal

The granted projects products are expected to have market potential and reach commercialization as project's outcome.

3 RULES & CONDITIONS

To avoid conflicts of interest, applications involving or coming from persons or organizations who are partners in EARASHI consortium or who are formally linked to partners of EARASHI consortium will not be accepted. For the purposes of this call for proposals, “organizations formally linked to the partners of the EARASHI consortium” are understood according to the definition of affiliated entities and third parties with a legal link to a beneficiary described within the HORIZON EUROPE Annotated Model Grant Agreement – Chapter 4 – Grant Implementation, available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/agr-contr/unit-mga_he_en.pdf

3.1 Eligible countries

Legal entities established in the following countries are eligible to receive funding through this Open Call:

- Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their overseas territories
- The HORIZON EUROPE Associated Countries

The EU Associated Countries participate in Horizon 2020 under the same conditions as the EU Member States. The list with all eligible Associated Countries can be found here:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

3.2 Targeted companies

EARASHI is targeting the following types of companies from the eligible countries mentioned above:

- Start-ups
- Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)¹

By essence, Midcaps² are not entitled to receive Financial Support to Third party within EARASHI open call.

According to the European Commission (see Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC: micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME)), start-ups and SMEs are enterprises

- engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of their legal form (including, in particular, self-employed persons and family businesses engaged in craft or other activities, and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in an economic activity) and
- employing fewer than 250 persons (expressed in ‘annual working units’ as defined in Article 5 of the Recommendation) and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

Start-up and SME are differentiated as follows.

Start-up

In EARASHI context, a **start-up** is a tech-oriented company. At the time of the open call closure (29/09/2023):

- It should employ less than 10 people (but more than 2 full time equivalent staff).
- It has operated for less than three years.
- It has attracted more than €50k early stage private sector investment or has demonstrable sales growth over 50% pa –

Start-ups will receive 100% FTSP while other SMEs would receive 70% funding. Start-ups will be expected to highlight the impact that the project will have on their overall Company strategy and growth prospects in the Impact section of their proposals (as well as the impact on society and European competitiveness).

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en

² Following the H2020 Work Programme 2016-2017, “Access to Risk Finance” definition, midcaps are companies with 250 to 3000 employees

SME

A legal entity will be considered an **SME** if it complies with the European Commission’s definition). The main factors defining an enterprise as an SME are (i) staff headcount and (ii) either turnover or balance sheet total, as specified in the table below:

Table 1: SME definition

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	or	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50M		≤ € 43 M
Small	< 50	≤ € 10M		≤ € 10 M
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2M		≤ € 2 M

Further requirements on the European Commission’s SME definition can be found at:

https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en

SMEs (other than start-up) will receive 70% funding. SMEs will be expected to highlight the impact that the project will have on their overall Company strategy and growth prospects in the Impact section of their proposals (as well as the impact on society and European competitiveness).

Mid-cap

A legal entity will be considered a mid-cap (250-3,000 employees) if it complies with the European Commission’s and the European Investment Bank definition at:

<https://www.eib.org/en/about/priorities/sme/index.htm> *EU recommendation 2003/361/EC.

Requirement

Any applicant commits itself:

- 1) to have at the moment of the submission of the application, or at the latest by the kick-off of the AE activities (corresponding to the entry into force of the Standard AE Agreement), the necessary stable and sufficient resources to implement the EARASHI AE,
- 2) to guarantee that its organization is not in any situation, which would exclude them from receiving financial support (including pending financial procedures concerning frauds or inappropriate management or undue previous appropriation of funds from other funding programmes). Companies that are under liquidation or in difficulty according to the Commission Regulation n° 651/2014, art. 2.18, will not be accepted. Neither proposals from companies that are excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law or by a decision of both national or EU authority.

- 3) not to cumulate the EARASHI funding with other forms of financial support for the same work (i.e. exclusion of double funding case)

The company start-up / SME classification will be approved at the closure date of the open call 2, e.g. December 20, 2023.

3.3 Ethical Issues

EARASHI complies with the European policies regarding data protection and privacy and respects fundamental ethical issues particularly those outlined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity”.

Each AE is responsible to respect European policies regarding data protection and privacy in particular to be GDPR compliant.

All data that are involved (collected, generated, stored) into an Application Experiment or that are processed in an AE must be GDPR compliant and should comply with the anonymization and minimization principle.

For more information on ethical issues, please consult the documentation provided by the European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf

All applicants have to confirm that if their proposal does or does not have ethical issues by selecting the relevant check-boxes in the proposal template. If you suspect that you have to answer “Yes” to any of the questions in the template, please contact EARASHI Ethics committee for guidance on the issue, e.g. CEA, Flanders Make, Mondragon, Ikerlan, Inegi and Steinbeis.

EARASHI consortium may check during the evaluation of a proposal if this declaration is in line with the contents of the proposal itself and reserves the right to contact the companies for clarification and eventually take necessary steps depending on the ethical issues.

3.4 Financial Support to Third Party’s rules

As per European Commission’s rules, companies have the possibility to participate in different open calls during EARASHI’s entire duration. In that case, the maximum possible financial support per EARASHI Third Party is limited to €200k. Financial support for a third party is called also cascade funding.

As per European Commission’s rules, financial support will not be awarded for work that was previously or is currently funded under any other (Regional, National or EU) programme.

3.5 Funding proposals

The funding of proposals will follow the Financial Support to Third Party rules detailed in the previous section (§3.4).

The **maximum funding** per Application Experiment and per Third party – under the condition that the above-mentioned limits to FSTP do not apply - is **€200k**, with a funding rate of **100%** of the budget for a Start-up and **70%** of the budget for an SME, no cascade funding for Mid-cap or Large Enterprise. This refers to the base configuration; more details are available in section §3.6.

Each **application experiment budget** will include justifications of cost and resources. The total European Commission available funding per Application Experiment will represent either 100% or 70% of the total cost involved by the selected company(-ies), depending on the company status, start-up or SME (see §3.2).

The amount of financial support will be calculated on the basis of the estimated costs. Each AE will include an implementation plan including milestones and deliverables, and a cost estimate justifying the costs and resources in relation to the implementation plan. The industrial third party will be funded 100% or 70% of their respective costs. The selected company will receive pre-financing of up to 25% of their respective total funding amount. 15% of the funding amount will be transferred at the granted project closure. The remaining payments (60%) will be transferred upon successful completion of milestones and/or deliverables, as defined in the signed EARASHI standard AE agreement

The AE budget must follow HORIZON Europe rules, among them:

- It must respect the limit of **15%** for specific subcontracting tasks that neither the EARASHI partners nor the Third Party can carry out
- The Third Party shall not make a profit from the EC funding
- The funding rate is **100%** or **70%** of the budget depending on the company status (start-up or SME).
- The personal costs are to be consumed by the workforce in the country where the Third Party that has been granted the fund is registered (a transfer of funds to affiliated or associated organizations is not allowed and would fall within the subcontracting rules).

It is strongly recommended that travel costs for dissemination in the “other direct costs” budget are included in the budget.

Please consider that all budgeted costs must comply with the applicable national law on taxes, labor and social security and must be in compliance with the rules and conditions laid out in Council and Parliament decisions relevant to the HORIZON EUROPE framework programme, in particular - but not exclusively - *“Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021”*.

Provisions for possible future losses or charges, exchange losses, costs related to return on capital, costs reimbursed in respect of another Union action or programme, debt and debt service charges and excessive or reckless expenditure are **ineligible costs** and **cannot be included** in the budget.

The expected duration of an Application Experiment is **15 to a maximum of 18 months**.

Regardless of the planned duration of the Application Experiment, it must be finished by the end of the EARASHI project (28.02.2026), including any possible delays.

3.6 Partners in the Application Experiment

EARASHI partners support selected Third Parties in different ways and roles. In general, a successful Application Experiment is built on a collaboration of the following parties (see §3.9):

Table 2: EARASHI AE configuration & partnership

AE configuration & partnership
<p style="color: #c00000; margin: 0;">BASE CONFIGURATION for building proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Third party (= the applying company) • EARASHI Building Block provider & monitoring partner • Cascade funding partner • €200k max of cascade funding for the applying company
<p style="color: #c00000; margin: 0;">ADDITIONAL SERVICES provided during the AE implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support • Human-centric design coaching • Eco-design approach • Engineering System integration support • Mentoring by industrial pairs & validation facility access

EARASHI partners support and serve as points of contact for the Third Party during the creation of the proposal until the closure of the call.

EARASHI Building Block provider partners will serve as monitoring partners. They will support and serve as a single point of contact for the Third Party during the execution of the selected AEs. The monitoring partner will ensure the project follows its workplan and will orchestrate the different additional services during the AE lifetime. If they cannot act as cascade funding partner, they will relay the AE status to the cascade funding partner and the validation of the defined milestones.

EARASHI cascade funding partner is in charge of the cascade funding (FSTP) payment to the Third-Party following the payment schedule described in the standard contract and the validation of the milestones and associated deliverables by the monitoring partner. Usually the cascade funding partner is the monitoring partner if the latter is the CEA, Flanders Make, Inegi, Ikerlan or Mondragon. It is the CEA (e.g. EARASHI coordinator) otherwise.

3.7 Available building blocks and services

At application and implementation stage, EARASHI offers access to the following BUILDING BLOCKS which will constitute a concrete part of the applicants' project itself. The Building Blocks available for the 2nd open call are:

- **Flanders Make**
Economic AI model for industrial applications, Operator Guidance recommender, Explainable AI, Mixed reality for operators, Skill-based AI enabled Robot programming framework, Follow-me principle – smart handler
- **Ikerlan**
RIC, MBD simulation, KONNEKT-MODHIST

- **Inegi**
LeanDfX framework, MSM (multi-layer stream mapping), Data operationalization methodologies
- **Mondragon**
ADAPT: context-aware system for collaboration between multiple agents, Deep learning based Industrial Quality Inspection methodology, Deflectometry for surface quality inspection for glossy or shiny finish, Fuzzy logic-based Modelling,
- **ST Microelectronics**
Motor control SW development kit, AI solution, IIoT Connectivity

They are fully described on the website at **Open Calls/Building Blocks** (<https://earashi.eu/building-blocks/>). The full catalogue is also downloadable. Please do not hesitate to contact directly the partner supporting Building Blocks for further explanation, or with the help of our helpdesk at info@earashi.eu. Some of the BBs are indicated as “Sold Out”, e.g. these BBs are not more available after the 1st open call results.

In addition, during the implementation of the selected proposals, EARASHI will also offer the following COACHING SERVICES:

- Business support
- Human-centric design coaching
- Eco-design approach
- Mentoring by industrial pair and access to validation facilities
- Engineering system integration support

These supporting services are part of the support provided to any selected AE project. These services are proposed, at the implementation stage, by the EARASHI consortium to answer at best the needs and expectations of the successfully selected AE projects.

For more information about these offers, their technical capabilities, please consult the website at **Open Calls/Coaching Services** (<https://earashi.eu/coaching-services/>) or contact the relevant partner(s) – with the help of our helpdesk at info@earashi.eu.

3.8 Proposal requirements

In addition to the administrative rules mentioned above, a proposal has to comply with the following preconditions to be fundable:

1. At least one of the Building Blocks (BB) has to be used
 - a. It is highly recommended to select only one single BB per Application Experiment and to well identify and explain its added value to the project.
 - b. If the applicant foresees to select more than one building block (combination of BBs provided by either different EARASHI consortium members or one single EARASHI consortium member), it is pre-requisite to clarify the possibility with the partners before submission of a proposal, in order to check the feasibility both technically and budget-wise, as well as its pertinence. This will however not lead to a more preferential treatment during the evaluation phase.
 - c. Please note that application coming up with more than 2 building blocks will be rejected.

2. Coaching services should be an integral part of the project implementation when selected:
 - a. The following services - *Business coaching, Human-centric design approach, Eco-design* – are mandatory for every proposal. An eco-design WP is a priori proposed in the implementation.
 - b. The services *Engineering system integration support* and *Mentoring by industrial pairs & access to validation facilities* are optional, depending on each application needs.
 - c. For every service that will be deployed in the application, a dedicated WP must be described with associated deliverables and resources.

The cybersecurity service is setup in forms of online webinars and thus does not require specific implementation description.

3.9 Focus/Technical area

The applications are expected to target EARASHI scope as detailed in §2 of this document “To improve the working conditions, trust, and acceptance of collaborative embodied AI in robotic systems, for the production machines/tools sector. His outcomes are expected to help employees in their daily activities and improve their working conditions, leading to a productivity increase.”

The applications must respond to one of the 6 challenges still open after the 1st open call, detailed in the *Challenges Description document* (<https://earashi.eu/open-calls/>), e.g.:

- Robotic assistance for heavy duty
- Machine/tools for recycling goods, electronics, batteries
- Digitalization procedure for production tools & machines for industry 5.0
- Human-centric robotic assistance for assembly work cell
- Automation for the optimization of intra-factory logistics
- Enhanced digital planning to optimize the execution of the tasks of production operators

The application should clearly explained how they are going to bring answers to the targeted challenge.

The Application should be built involving the implementation of one the Building Blocks proposed by EARASHI partners (§3.7) and further detailed in the Building Blocks catalogue (<https://earashi.eu/building-blocks/>).

Applications are also expected to consider a worker-centric approach in their implementation and the potentiality of an eco-design approach, based on the coaching services proposed by EARASHI and further detailed in the Coaching Services catalogue (<https://earashi.eu/coaching-services/>).

4 PROPOSAL CREATION AND SUBMISSION

4.1 Registration on the submission portal

Applicants are encouraged to register in the EARASHI proposal submission portal as early as possible: <https://earashi.eu/application/>.

In this way, EARASHI consortium is aware of the interest of a company in the open call and can support the applicants even if they have not yet contacted an EARASHI partner.

4.2 One stage submission

Proposals for EARASHI open calls are submitted in a single stage, by submitting a complete proposal through our submission portal. A complete proposal is constituted of three documents:

- Proposal description report: technical description oriented: small document (20 pages maximum) written in English and submitted under pdf format (Application form document).
- A recorded pitch, business-oriented: 7 min recorded video in English.
- The “Eco-design maturity level” questionnaire (available on the registration page) fully completed.

4.3 Proposal description language and length

The proposal description has to follow the structure of the proposal template provided on the website. The template (Application Form) can be downloaded as a Microsoft-Word file from the registration page: <https://earashi.eu/application/>.

The proposal has to be written in English. Proposals submitted in any other language will not be evaluated. The proposal has to be submitted in a pdf format.

The proposal must not exceed 20 pages in length (font dimension 11 min., font Calibri, min margins 1,5up/down - 1,5left/right).”), **not including the title page, the administrative declarations and section 4 (Ethical Issues) of the proposal. Proposals exceeding the page length indicated will be penalized with a discount of the final score proportional to the number of exceeded pages**. Applicants are free to provide limited additional information such as letters of support or additional data or references in the Appendix that does not count to this page count. It is recommended that applicants include in their proposals also innovation management/business development actions to be subsequently implemented.

4.4 Recorded pitch language and length

The recorded pitch has to follow the guidelines as listed in Annex 1 of this document. More information will be provided during webinars. The webinar will be available online and recorded pitch guidelines can be downloaded from the open call website at <http://earashi.eu/open-calls/>.

The recorded pitch must be in English. Pitch submitted in any other language will not be evaluated.

4.5 Support during the creation of the proposal

Applicants are **strongly encouraged to contact one of EARASHI partners** in order to get more information on the technologies (building blocks) available, the Innovation management and other services and advice on how to create a successful proposal prior to submission.

In particular, it is highly recommended **to contact the building block provider in advance** (recommended minimum 2 weeks before the submission) to clarify the potential cooperation, involvement, role and feasibility of their proposed solution.

EARASHI partners are pleased to help applicants with registration, submitting proposals and finding the partner that best suit their needs, establish and facilitate contact between Third Parties and the relevant EARASHI consortium members – and to make sure that the proposal complies to all rules of the open call.

If contacted in time, they can give feedback on certain aspects of a proposal to enable possible improvements to a proposal before it is submitted.

Applicants can get actively engaged and contact EARASHI through:

- The helpdesk: info@earashi.eu
- Direct contact with EARASHI partners
- Participation in Webinar and on-line version
- EARASHI networking events.

Experience indicates that proposals with active engagement before submission (early enough to leave time for exchanges) are more likely to succeed.

4.6 Submission of proposal

Proposals to EAREASHI open calls are submitted through EARASHI dedicated proposal submission portal.

Only proposals submitted through this portal before the closure of the call will be evaluated after its closure. Proposals must be received by the closing time and date of the call (20/12/2023 at 5:00 pm Brussels Time). Late proposals or proposals submitted to any other address or by any other means will not be evaluated.

If one of the documents is missing (pdf file, video, Eco-design questionnaire), the proposal will be considered incomplete and therefore will not be evaluated.

If you discover an error in your proposal you can at any time - provided the call deadline has not passed - submit a new version of your proposal in our portal. Only the last version received before the call deadline will be considered in the evaluation.

All proposals will be evaluated as submitted; after the close of a call, no additions or changes to received proposals will be taken into account.

Submission guidelines (handbook, video) will be available on the website to guide the applicants through the registration and submission phase.

Do not wait until the last minute to submit the final version of your proposal. A complete proposal includes the proposal description (pdf document), the recorded pitch and the fully completed eco-design questionnaire. Failure of your proposal to arrive on time for any reason, including communication delays, is not acceptable as a delay circumstance. The time of receipt of your submission as recorded by the portal system will be definitive. Any proposal submitted after the deadline, no matter the reason, will result in rejection.

4.7 Acknowledgement of receipt

The submission of a proposal will be confirmed by the proposal submission system through an automated email.

The acknowledgment of receipt will be emailed to you when the call is closed (see Annex 2 of this document). Get in touch with us immediately if this is not the case.

The sending of an acknowledgment of receipt does not imply that your proposal has been accepted as eligible for evaluation.

5 PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

5.1 Admissibility and Eligibility check

A proposal is eligible if it complies with the following requirements:

1. The proposal description is written in English, the recorded pitch is in English and the eco-design questionnaire is fully completed.
2. The submitted documents are readable (not corrupted), fully completed and using the templates and requests, for both the proposal description and recorded pitch.
3. The proposal is submitted by a legal entity established in one of the countries mentioned in section §3.1 Eligible countries.
4. It confirms that the “Standard AE Agreement” available on the website has been read and is intended to be signed if the proposal is selected.
5. Its content corresponds to the call topic description (in scope/out of scope).
6. The proposal is cross-border and the company(ies) are from Eligible countries (see §3.1).
7. The company(ies) claiming cascade funding are Start-up or SME (see definition in §3.2)).

A proposal will only be deemed “out of scope” in clear-cut cases when there is no obvious link between the proposal and the scope of the call. If the proposal is partially aligned with the scope of the call, it will be evaluated (in any case).

If any of the above criteria do not apply to a proposal, the applicant will be informed about it and the proposal will not be furthered into the evaluation process. In any other case, the proposal will be evaluated as described in the following sections 5.2 and 5.3 of this document.

5.2 Proposal evaluation overview

EARASHI project will evaluate proposals received in the open calls in the light of the criteria that govern the European Commission’s original evaluation and selection of their projects. All evaluations are carried out in the light of the same basic principles:

- **Excellence:** The proposals selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the call
- **Transparency:** Funding decisions are based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants will receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals
- **Independence:** Evaluators assess proposals on a personal basis. Evaluators represent neither their employer nor their country.
- **Impartiality:** All proposals submitted to a call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants³.

³ In the frame of any restrictions provided for in the call

- **Objectivity:** Evaluators assess each proposal as submitted not on its potential if certain changes were to be made.
- **Accuracy:** Evaluators make their judgment against the official evaluation criteria of the call or topic the proposal addresses, and nothing else.
- **Consistency:** Evaluators apply the same standard of judgment to all proposals.
- **Confidentiality:** All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence

The evaluation of Application Experiment proposals is based on scores given according to four criteria:

Criteria	Associated documents
Excellence	These 3 criteria will be evaluated through the proposal description (pdf document)
Impact	
Implementation Quality	
Business Case	These criteria will be evaluated through the recorded pitch

The evaluation criteria and the scoring system are described in detail in the next section of this document. The evaluation process in EARASHI follows the three basic steps:

- Plan to have three external experts to evaluate all the proposals with regards to the criteria of *Excellence*, *Impact* and *Implementation Quality*.
- A business case evaluation will be done through a 7 min recorded pitch posted by the applicant, following requirement provided online, through webinars set-up by EARASHI.
- EARASHI evaluation committee will perform a global evaluation of the proposals based on the results of both the technical and business case evaluation, in regards to the criteria of Excellence, Impact and Implementation Quality.

The external experts are individuals from different sectors: science, industry or academic and with experience in the field of innovation. These experts are internationally recognized authorities in the relevant specialist area and are independent of any member of the consortium and any proposer. They will also sign a non-disclosure form with EARASHI to ensure the confidentiality of the proposals.

Each of the three steps, described above will assign a score to each proposal in the following way:

- Each external expert will assign a score between 0 and 5 to each of the criteria mentioned above. The assigned scores of the experts will be averaged for each criterion to get one single score for each criterion.
- The business case evaluation will assign a score from 0 to 5 to the criteria mentioned above
- EARASHI evaluation committee will assign a score between 0 and 5 to each of the criteria mentioned above.

Cross-border collaboration between the applicant and the BB partner is strongly encouraged. To that purpose, extra scoring will be added to each proposal with company and BB partner from at least 2 different eligible countries involved in the AE dedicated consortium (after the evaluators' evaluation).

During EARASHI consensus meeting, each proposal will be discussed and a consensus formed on the scoring. To achieve a single score for each of the criteria of *Excellence*, *Impact* and *Implementation Quality*, the scores by EARASHI evaluation committee and the score of the external experts (which has been combined into a single score for each criterion as described above) will be averaged.

A total score of a proposal is reached by calculation the sum of all individual scores of the evaluated criteria of a proposal. Each criterion is equally weighted. Therefore, the overall maximum score for an experiment proposal is 20.

For a proposal to be considered for funding, each individual score must meet a minimum threshold, which is 3 out of 5 points. The total sum of the individual scores must reach the minimum threshold of 13 points.

5.3 Evaluation criteria and score

The evaluation of Application Experiment proposals will be based on scores given according to four basic criteria: *Excellence*, *Impact*, *Implementation Quality* and the *business case* of the AE.

The **Excellence** is evaluated according to the following criteria:

- How well the proposal fits within the EARASHI scope (see §2 of the present document)?
- Well describe the measures you will take to respect European policies regarding data protection and privacy, how you ensure to be GDPR compliant.
- How well does the proposed solution address the digitalization challenge as detailed in the open call text?
- Are the proposed objectives clear and **pertinent**?
- How well does the proposal answer to the selected EARASHI Challenge? How well is the selected BB aligned with the selected challenge?
- How well does the proposed solution integrate the required functionalities?
- How intuitive is the technology for the end-users? How easy can the technology be integrated into the environment? How robust is the technology?
- Does it solve specific technological challenges (mobility, communication, etc.)?
- How well does the proposed work integrate the EARASHI building block? How does the BB bring real added value to the proposition?
- How well the current and target TRL is described? How realistic is the target TRL progress?
- To what extent is the proposed work ambitious, has innovation potential, and is beyond the state of the art (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches)?
- Is the concept sound and shows a clear plan for the development of a working solution?
-

The **Impact** is evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **Does the proposal enhance innovation capacity and the integration of** new knowledge of the companies?
- How does the proposed work clearly differentiate from the competition?
- **Are the proposed measures** to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), to communicate the project, and to manage research data where relevant effective?
- Are any other **environmental and socially important impacts**, not already covered, relevant?
- Does the proposal present any potential in terms of **sustainability**? What could be the **contribution to circular economy**? Which benefits are expected?

The **Implementation Quality** and efficiency will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- How effectively will the Application Experiment be managed? Is the proposed work plan coherent and effective?
- Are tasks, deliverables, deadlines well defined and adapted to the goals of the proposal?
- Is the allocation of tasks and dedicated resources (e.g. human capital, equipment, person-hours, etc.) appropriate and necessary to perform the scope of the proposal and achieve its objectives?
- Are the costs clearly defined and aligned with the required efforts?
- Have crucial risk (technological and other) to the success of the Application Experiment been identified and how effectively will those be managed.
- Does the third party possess the technical skills and abilities necessary to perform the scope of the proposal?
- How is the collaboration between the different partners foreseen: the company-(ies), the BB partner and the coaching service partners (human centric, eco-design, system integration and validation facility) part of the proposal?

The **Business case evaluation** of the proposal will be performed through a recorded pitch prepared by the company following given recommendations and describing:

- **Market attractiveness** taking into account the market size, growth potential – potential market capture for the company (SOM)
- **Differentiation** (UVP) highlight your unique value proposition – the unique selling point, compared to the competition
- **The business model / go to market explaining** what is the market access for the company, what is the plan to address the first customers, what is the plan for the future business development
- **Quality of the team** describing how the team is qualified for the execution of the business plan.
- **Strategic fit for the company** explaining what is the strategic coherence of the project for the company.

Transversal criteria such “Sustainability and circular economy (eco-design, refitting, refurbishing, recycling, etc.)”, “Environment and low carbon economy contribution (real and measurable impact)”, “Equal opportunities, gender balance and diversity”, “Social impact” will also be considered by the evaluators when scoring the applications.

A specific attention will be given to the human centricity characteristics of the project (both in the application and the pitch video).

The application domain should be consistent with the project overall scope, e.g. production machine or manufacturing.

The Eco-design questionnaire is mandatory as part of the submission process. It helps to quantify your eco-design maturity level, thus answer the application form and describe your potential to deploy an eco-design approach.

The scores used during the evaluation process indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

- 0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 – Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- 4 – Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
- 5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

For the criterion scoring, only points and half-points are allowed. Decimal point may arise during the calculation of the average score of the individual assessment provided by the three steps of the evaluation (see §5.2), but not as individual evaluation grade.

5.4 AE selection

The outcome of the evaluation will be a ranked list of all proposals, ordered in descending order by the total score obtained by the proposal.

The final distribution will depend on the received proposals and the EARASHI consortium keeps the right to modify this distribution. Hence, priority will be given to the best proposals in the scope of EARASHI open call.

Depending on the available budget for funding, the available resources for the technological offer of EARASHI consortium members, the number of eligible and fundable proposals in the call, the appropriate number of proposals - based on this ranked list - will be selected for funding. Whilst normally the highest-ranked proposals will be selected for funding, there might be objective reasons (as mentioned above) for objecting to a specific third party. In this case, the choice may pass to the next-ranked proposal.

The selected proposals will be reported to EARASHI project officer of the European Commission for a final granting decision.

5.5 Feedback to applicants

After the evaluation of the proposals, all applicants will be informed if their application experiment was accepted or not. The first call notifications are planned to be released on second half of March 2024. Further information will be displayed on EARASHI website when available.

In case a proposal is selected, the applicant will receive a short summary of the evaluation outcome along with further information about the upcoming steps. In case a proposal is not granted, they will receive a full evaluation report, including an extended summary with the main remarks of the evaluation to allow the improvement of the proposal for future submissions in other such calls.

6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1 Call Helpdesk

For further information on the call for proposal, contact our helpdesk (email: info@earashi.eu) or join the LIVE Q&A sessions held via conference call systems (information will be provided on the website).

6.2 Intellectual Property Rights

All partners involved in a funded and implemented Application Experiment will sign a Standard AE Agreement before the Application Experiment starts. All information of whatever nature and in whatever form or mode of communication, which is disclosed by a Party to any other during the implementation of the Application Experiment and which has been explicitly marked as “confidential” at the time of disclosure, or when disclosed orally, has been identified as confidential at the time of disclosure and has been confirmed and designated in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days from oral disclosure, is “Confidential Information” and shall not be disclosed to any other third party.

Ownership of the developed product of an Application Experiment will remain with the Third Party. In case any IP is transferred or developed during the implementation of the Application Experiment, a bilateral contract between the involved parties will be concluded to define the exploitation rules.

For all questions on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), please see the Standard AE Agreement that is available on the website through the registration page (<https://earashi.eu/application/>).

7 CHECK-LIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

Please consider this checklist as a helpful tool to maximize the chances of your proposal to be successful:

DESIGN PHASE

1. **Attentively define the scope and approach of your proposal**, in particular:
 - a) Read in detail the call for AE and the associated conditions. Define the **project scope** and match it with the topics of EARASHI call for proposal.
 - b) Check your **eligibility** as an applicant considering both your location and whether or not your company falls within the definition of start-up, SME.
 - c) Contact with due advance (min 3 weeks) a technical partner of EARASHI and define in detail the type of cooperation foreseen (cross-border requirement to be respected also in this case)
 - d) Have a look at the proposals selected through the first open call at <https://earashi.eu/open-call-1-selected-projects/>.

1. **Register in our portal and contact an EARASHI Partner for support.** Past experience indicates that proposals with engagement before submission are more likely to succeed. Each applicant should:
 - Contact an EARASHI partner as soon as possible for guidance and
 - Register in our portal.

DEVELOPMENT PHASE

2. **Feasibility recurrent checks:** periodically control that your planned work fits within the call for proposals. In particular, at a middle mature stage, check that your proposal does indeed address the topic in this open call and that you satisfy the formal participation requirements (eligible country, written in English)
3. **Did you maximize your chances?** The EARASHI consortium members can give valuable feedback during the creation of your proposal that can significantly increase the quality of a proposal. Prior contact with one EARASHI technical partner can ensure the feasibility of the proposal and that the technology service targeted is the most appropriate one to answer the goal of the proposal, that the company expectations are compatible with the allocated time and resources and that their role is clearly explained in the proposal.
4. **Budgetary limits:** Check that you comply with the budgetary limits, that you have envisaged admissible cost categories and that you comply with the funding rate foreseen.

FINALIZATION AND SUBMISSION PHASE

5. **Completeness check:** Check that your proposal is complete and addresses all mandatory questions. Does your proposal answer all requests/comments? Proposals should be precise, concise and should answer requested questions. Omitting requested information will almost certainly lead to lower scores in the evaluation. The application submission is threefold: 1) pdf application form, 2) video pitch and 3) eco-design maturity level questionnaire.
6. **Readability and correctness:** Check that your proposal printable and all information (especially in charts, figures etc.) is readable. **Have you used the current template (Application Form)?** All proposals have to be based on the current application form available on EARASHI's website. Check that the video is audible and respects the timing. Verify that the eco-design questionnaire is answered.
7. **Submitted Document Check:** Check that the submitted documents (pdf document, pitch video, Eco-design questionnaire) are readable (not-corrupted).
8. **Timely submission: Have you submitted your proposal before the deadline?** It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. **The deadline is December 20th, 2023 at 5 p.m. Brussels time**

ANNEX 1: RECORDED PITCH VIDEO CONTENT

Content of the 7 min pitch video in English

- Companies' profiles (consortium profile)
- Introduction of the project management team
- Selected technology building block
- Targeted challenge & problem solved
- Definition of the product/solution to be developed
- Expected differentiation – competitive advantage
- Exploitation strategy: how would you exploit your development after EARASHI? (For each consortium member)
- How does the project fit your company goals & strategy?
- Expected level of demonstration at the end of the project – potential customer demonstration
- Expected growth at the end of the project (revenues, people...)

Requirements

- Slide deck mandatory / or video editing
- Information needed must be explicitly stated in the slides
- Pitch must be recorded by the applicant: no synthetic voice, or voice actors
- Must last at least 6 minutes and the maximum 8 minutes
- Do not speed-up the video in order to fit in the required time limit

Please note that only the videos will be used to assess the business part of each application, make sure all the information needed and stated in the content section above is mentioned in the video.

ANNEX 2: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

Dear xxx,

Thank you for submitting your proposal for consideration as Application Experiment in the HORIZON project EARASHI.

The evaluation will take place in the next few weeks. You will be notified as soon as possible after this whether or not your proposal has been successful.

EARASHI consortium as a whole would like to thank you for your interest in our activities.

Yours sincerely,