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**DIGITAL, INNOVATION, AND GREEN TECHNOLOGY PROJECT
(DIGIT PROJECT)**

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**REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

Donje Svetice 38, Zagreb 10 000, Croatia

**DIGITAL, INNOVATION, AND GREEN TECHNOLOGY PROJECT (DIGIT PROJECT)**

IBRD LOAN NO. 9558-HR

PROJECT ID: P180755

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**Annex VI. Business Development Plan for Research Center**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**PROFESSIONALIZATION OF RESEARCH CENTERS**

CALL REFERENCE NUMBER: DIGIT.1.2.03

June 2025Business Development Plan for Research Center

**Instructions for completing the document**

This document provides guidance to applicants on the expected structure and content of the Business Development Plan (BDP) for the Research Center. Applicants are required to follow this structure when preparing the BDP and to provide all relevant information under the indicated sections. The BDP should present a clear and structured description of the current situation, key challenges, development strategy, planned activities, expected results, and financial and sustainability plans related to the Research Center. The maximum length of the Business Development Plan is 25 pages, excluding annexes (e.g., CVs of key staff, equipment lists). The document must be prepared using Times New Roman font size 11, written in with clear and concise language, avoiding unnecessary descriptive content.

**Important note:**

The Business Development Plan is a key project document and must be fully aligned with the information provided in other parts of the project application, particulary with the Application Form submitted through the eDIGIT portal.

#  Executive Summary

1. **Strategic goals:**

**Summarise** the key strategic goals that the **Applicant** aims to achieve (five years after the project completion) through the activities of the Research Center, and explain how these aligns with the Applicant’s overall objectives, **particularly in relation to innovation, entrepreneurship, and commercialisation through engagement with the academia and industry**.

1. **Key objectives of the plan:**
	1. Summarise key objectives of the business development plan linking them to key, activities (capacity building, process implementation, process digitalisation, etc.) within the project that will lead to their achievement,
	2. Professionalization of organizational and operational model,
	3. Optimized and transparent access to research infrastructure and services,
	4. Enhanced capacity of Research Center staff,
	5. Strengthened collaboration with industry and other research infrastructures,
	6. Increased visibility and expanded user base of the Research Center infrastructure,
	7. Sustainability of the Research Center in the post-project period.
2. **Key impacts of the plan:**

Summarise expected outcomes and impact of the execution of the plan on **infrastructure utilisation**, **research commercialization, private sector engagement, and financial sustainability** with link to the key expected results at the end of the project that will lead to these outcomes.

# 2. Current state & Options for Development of Research Center

## 2.1 Organizational & Resources Overview

* Brief overview of the organisational structure of the Research Centre, including relevant management and research capacities. Describe the roles and experience of key staff members involved in the implementation of the BDP. Where applicable, refer directly to demonstrated capacities outlined in the CVs. CVs of key team members must be included as annexes to the BDP. To ensure clarity, applicants are encouraged to include a dedicated “Annexes” section listing all submitted annexes and their contents.
* Overview of the existing research infrastructure. Specify key equipment with year of purchase.
* Overview of key resources (knowledge, data, technologies, products, and people) owned, used or developed by the Research Center, including the year of creation or acquisition for each resource.
* Key existing processes (both internal and external). Current mechanisms related to infrastructure utilisation, private sector collaboration, research commercialisation and financial sustainability (including short background information when and how these processes were developed/introduced).

## 2.2 Current services & clients

Overview of the existing services offered by the Research Centre, with relevant key statistics and the year each service was established. Focus in particular on the following types of services:

* **Access to infrastructure** (e.g., renting of equipment or research staff time): indicate the number of equipment units and provide usage statistics (e.g., number of users, number of sessions, total hours of use),
* **Analytical services**,
* **Contract research and development (R&D)**: number of contracts and total value of projects,
* **Collaborative R&D**: number and total value of projects.

Present **comprehensive data on the overall utilization of research infrastructure**, regardless of user type. This should include information on the categories of users (e.g., internal staff, external research organisations, industry partners) and their usage patterns. The aim is to provide a clear picture of how the infrastructure is currently used and to identify underutilised capacities and opportunities for broader access and collaboration.

Include a summary of key users or user groups, their needs, and examples of services or solutions provided to them. A list of key users and projects may be included as an annex.

## 2.3 Recent initiatives

Overview of key recent initiatives and their contribution to infrastructure utilisation, private sector collaboration, research commercialisation and financial sustainability. Specify the key initiatives, place them in temporal context and provide some key indicators related to them (for example, the number of projects submitted to certain types of calls demonstrating efforts to advance existing knowledge; the number of fairs attended reflecting attempts to find commercialisation partners; the number of potential collaborative projects or contract research opportunities evaluated etc.).

## 2.4 Current results

Overview of current/previous status (covering last 3 years prior to this project’s submission, if available) of key operational indicators related to infrastructure utilisation, private sector collaboration, research commercialisation and financial sustainability. Include all relevant indicators that will be tracked within the Research Center. Some indicators can be introduced within the project if they have not been previously tracked but are considered relevant.

## 2.5 Key challenges

Provide an analysis/summary of the main challenges facing the Research Center, also taking into account the following areas:

1. **Professionalization of organizational and operational model (examples of some challenges and gaps):**
	* Gaps in management/technical/administrative capacities,
	* Gaps/weaknesses in processes related to the management of Research Center (utilisation, commercialisation, collaboration, sustainability),
	* Level of integration with existing research activities of the Applicant’s institution, with research community,
2. **Optimized and transparent access to research infrastructure and services (examples of some challenges and gaps):**
	* Availability/lack of information on utilisation of research infrastructure,
	* Access to infrastructure and services (including modes of usage, pricing, transparency, etc.),
	* Utilisation of infrastructure and services (internal, external),
3. **Enhanced capacity of Research Center staff (examples of some challenges and gaps):**
	* Gaps in knowledge and understanding of needs of private sector users/potential users,
	* Gaps/weaknesses in the ability to satisfy private sector needs,
4. **Strengthened collaboration with industry and other research infrastructures (examples of some challenges and gaps):**
	* Level of integration with technology transfer processes and related ecosystem,
	* Collaboration with industry though collaborative and contract R&D,
5. **Increased visibility and user base of the Research Center (examples of some challenges and gaps):**
* Limited recognition of Research Center’s capacities among potential users and stakeholders,
* Lack of targeted outreach and promotional activities (e.g., marketing materials, online presence),
* Absence of strategic communication aimed at expanding the user base (academia, industry, public sector),
* Insufficient data on current users and usage patterns to guide visibility strategies,
* Weak positioning in relevant national and international networks and platforms.

This list is not exhaustive list. The Applicant should adress key challenges relevant to their project and Research Center.

## 2.6 SWOT analysis

Provide a SWOT analysis based on identified challenges and other information on current status of the Research Center..

## 2.7 Opportunities for further development of client base and services

Based on the identified internal and external challenges, opportunities and threats outline potential opportunities/directions for further development. This may include expanding cooperation with existing clients, finding new ones as well as improving, changing, extending, streamlining, or introducing new services. Additionally, describe potential opportunities for improving existing processes or introducing new ones.

# 3. Strategy & Objectives

## 3.1 Strategic goals

Outline the key strategic goals of the Applicant institution related to innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation. Describe the contribution of the Research Center to achieving these goals.

Additionally, describe how the Research Center aligns with national and EU strategies and strategic documents, as well as with relevant international infrastructures, if any.

## 3.2 Key objectives of the Business Development plan

List the key objectives of this business development plan. Ensure that the objectives are clearly defined, specific, measurable, attainable, and aligned with the goals of the Call.

The development goals of the Research Center should focus on the strategic enhancement of organizational capacity, optimization of research infrastructure usage, and strengthening collaboration with industry. The Business Development Plan should address the following types of objectives:

1. Professionalization of organizational and operational model
2. Optimized and transparent access to research infrastructure and services
3. Enhanced capacity of Research Center staff
4. Strengthened collaboration with industry and other research infrastructures
5. Increased visibility and user base of the Research Center

## 3.3 Key indicators

Define key indicators to be achieved during the project and in the post-implementation period. Please take into account the requirements in the Theory of Change and results framework outlined in the Guidelines for Applicants.

Data on outcome and impact indicators will be collected up to five years following project completion via post-implementation reports or surveys. By applying to the Call, the applicants consent to being contacted by MSEY after project completion.

As a baseline value, please provide data from the 3 years preceding the submission of the project proposal.

Additional rows may be added to the table below as needed, depending on the number of planned project outcome and output indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator name | Level (output or outcome) | Baseline value | Target value | Deadline for achievement | Reporting frequency | Rationale for achievement |
|  | *<Outcome>**<Output>* |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *<Outcome>**<Output>* |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *<Outcome>**<Output>* |  |  |  |  |  |

Additionally, the Applicant may include further operational indicators to track infrastructure utilization, service usage, knowledge creation, collaborative practices, coverage of costs by industry, revenue generation, sustainability, expansion of user base, etc. In this case also provide historical and future value as described above. Include all relevant indicators that will be tracked within the Research Center. New indicators may be introduced within the project particularly if they have not been previously tracked but are considered relevant.

# 4. Development Plan & Operationalization

**Development plan should cover eligible activities and sub-activities according to eligibility conditions and objectives:**

1. Professionalization of organizational and operational model;
2. Optimized and transparent access to research infrastructure and services;
3. Enhanced capacity and competences of Research Center staff;
4. Strengthened collaboration with industry and other research infrastructures;
5. Increased visibility and user base of the Research Center.

**Activity 1**

|  |
| --- |
| Implementation start date |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| Duration of implementation (months) |
|  |

**Activity 2**

|  |
| --- |
| Implementation start date |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| Duration of implementation (months) |
|  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of the activity | Start month of activity implementation | Duration of activity implementation | Description of the activity | Deliverables |
| *<Activity 1>* |  |  |  | *<Deliverable 1>**<Deliverable 2>**<Deliverable 3>* |
| *<Activity2>* |  |  |  | *<Deliverable 4>**<Deliverable 5>* |
| *<Activity 3>* |  |  |  | *<Deliverable 6>* |

*Please, add as many lines as needed.*

For each planned activity, please provide a Gantt chart with timelines, expected outputs, key milestones, deliverables and responsible persons.

# 5. Budget & Financial Plan

## 5.1 Budget overview

The budget for the Business Development Plan (Project) is structured over a 3-year period and is aligned with the eligible cost categories.

Below is a suggested budget template for project’s implementation period. Additional lines could be introduced under each category to explain only main costs. Provide justification for each cost.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cost name | Cost category | Funding category | Number of units | Unit cost | Total | Description |
| *[Business Development Manager]* | *<Direct costs – personnel>* | *<Research organizations>* |  |  |  |  |
| *[Employee 2]* | *<Direct costs – personnel>* | *<Research organizations>* |  |  |  |  |
| *Activity 1 - [Cost 1]* | *<Direct cost - other>* | *<Research organizations>* |  |  |  |  |
| *Activity 1 - [Cost 2]* | *<Direct cost - other>* | *<Research organizations>* |  |  |  |  |
| *[Activity 2 - [Cost 1]*  | *<Direct cost - other>* | *<Research organizations>* |  |  |  |  |
| *[Activity 3 - [Cost 1]*  | *<Direct cost - other>* | *<Research organizations>* |  |  |  |  |
| *……* | *<Direct cost - other>* | *<Research organizations>* |  |  |  |  |

## 5.2 Financial Plan

Financial plan includes all revenues (including project revenues) and all costs (including those covered by the project).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Revenue Category | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 2033 | Total (€) |
| Project Revenues |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Access to Infrastructure |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Analytical Services |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contract R&D |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Collaborative R&D |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other Revenues |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total revenues |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cost Category | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 2033 | Total (€) |
| Personnel Costs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Research & Laboratory Costs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Equipment & Infrastructure |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Facilities & Utilities |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Digital Infrastructure |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Collaboration & Networking |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Communication & Dissemination |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project Management & Administration |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total costs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# 6. Risk Management & Sustainability Strategy

## 6.1 Identified risks and mitigation strategies

Please provide information on the identified internal and external, technology and non-technology risks, their impacts and probabilities. Include a risk matrix categorizing risks by their likelihood and impact, along with mitigation strategies.

## 6.2. Sustainability strategy

The applicant is required to describe the long-term sustainability strategy for the Research Center, addressing the following key areas:

1. **Human resources** (plans to ensure the availability and retention of skilled personnel, talent management strategies, measures for continuous training and capacity building to enhance relevant business development, technology transfer, intellectual property rights, collaboration competencies and leadership),
2. **Activities** (sustaining core activities such as infrastructure utilization, service delivery, and post-project collaboration with industry, mechanisms for maintaining and upgrading infrastructure and services, as well as strategies for expanding service in response to market demand),
3. **Financing** (strategies for securing diversified revenue streams, including income from services and contract and collaborative projects, national/EU grants, public-private partnerships etc. An elaborate revenue projection should be provided within Financial plan section),
4. **Institutional Integration** (further alignment with the Applicant institution’s strategic goals, including the creation of relevant synergies in knowledge, capacities and processes between the Applicant and Research Center).

Detail sustainability mechanisms, such as knowledge transfer programs or institutional frameworks, aimed at preserving and continuing project benefits post-completion.