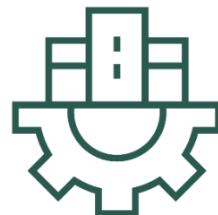




## **DIGITAL, INNOVATION, AND GREEN TECHNOLOGY PROJECT (DIGIT PROJECT)**



**CALL FOR PROPOSAL FOR THE DIRECT AWARD  
RENOVATION AND EQUIPPING OF THE HEADQUARTERS  
AND OPEN LABORATORIES (CoE MARBLE HQ)**

**CALL REFERENCE NUMBER: DIGIT.1.1.03**

**GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICANT – 4<sup>TH</sup> REVISION**

December 2025

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>CoE</b>	Center of Excellence
<b>DIGIT</b>	Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology Project
<b>E&amp;S</b>	environmental and social
<b>ESMF</b>	Environmental and Social Management Framework
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUR</b>	euro (currency)
<b>FAQ</b>	frequently asked questions
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>GOM</b>	Grants Operations Manual
<b>IBRD</b>	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>ICT</b>	information and communication technology
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>IoT</b>	Internet of Things
<b>IP</b>	Intellectual Property
<b>MSEY</b>	Ministry of Science, Education and Youth
<b>NDS</b>	National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia
<b>OG</b>	Official Gazette
<b>RDI</b>	research, development and innovation
<b>RI</b>	research infrastructure
<b>RO</b>	Research organization
<b>R&amp;I</b>	research and innovation
<b>S3</b>	Smart Specialization Strategy 2029
<b>STEM</b>	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
<b>VAT</b>	value added tax
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

## Definitions

In this document, the following terms and expressions are defined as follows:

- «Applicant» is an entity that intends to submit or has submitted a project proposal to the funding program (in this case, the *Research, technology, and innovation infrastructure projects* program and this Call for proposal) under a grant scheme.
- «Beneficiary» is the signatory to the Grant Agreement, which receives the funding, claims costs, and takes complete responsibility for the proper implementation of the proposed project.
- «Blue economy» is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.
- «Call for proposals» or «Call» refers to an invitation for project funding issued by the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth (MSEY) and represents funding opportunity available through DIGIT Project. Direct financial contribution in the form of a grant is awarded to the Beneficiary through the Call to engage in activities that support the objectives of the DIGIT Project and policies related to digital transformation and green transition.
- «Double funding» means eligible expenditures have not been previously financed by grants from any public source (including from the EU) nor will they be financed more than once besides this Call.
- «Grant» refers to funding provided or proposed to be provided under the terms of a Grant Agreement, in accordance with the criteria and procedures outlined in the Grants Operations Manual (GOM) and Call for proposals issued by MSEY. It is awarded to an eligible Beneficiary for a project financing and is funded from the proceeds of the loan.
- «Grant Agreement» refers to an agreement entered into between the MSEY and a Beneficiary, for financing and implementing a project.
- «Grant scheme» collectively refers to the schemes or programs for extending grants to beneficiaries under sub-components 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2 of the DIGIT Project following the GOM.
- «Program» refers to the Research, technology, and innovation infrastructure projects under the DIGIT Project. This Call for proposals DIGIT.1.1.03 is published under this Program.
- «Project» means a project carried out by a Beneficiary using a grant under one of the grant schemes (in this case the Research, technology, and innovation infrastructure projects).
- «Research and knowledge-dissemination organization» or «research organization» refers to an entity (in case of this Call, the Applicant), irrespective of its legal status (public or private) or source of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development, or to widely disseminate the results of such activities through teaching, publication, or knowledge transfer. Where such entity also engages in economic activities, the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Entities that can exert a decisive influence over such an organization, for example as shareholders or members, may not enjoy preferential access to the results generated by it.

## 1. About the context of the Call

This Call for proposals for the direct award *Renovation and Equipping of the Headquarters and Open Laboratories (CoE MARBLE HQ)* (hereafter: the Call) is financed by the Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology (DIGIT) Project. The DIGIT Project, a EUR 106 million initiative, aims to drive digital transformation and green transition across the economy, increase funding for industrial research and experimental development, and support the Croatian government in strengthening institutional capacity for delivering research and innovation (R&I) policies. Funded through a World Bank (WB) loan signed in June 2023, the DIGIT Project is scheduled for completion by December 2028.

The Call is implemented under the program Research, technology, and innovation infrastructure projects (hereafter: the Program), which is established to strengthen the capacity of strategically significant research infrastructure (RI) that directly supports the development of human resources for scientific research and collaboration with the private sector. This Call represents a direct grant award procedure for the Applicant Center of Excellence MARBLE (CoE MARBLE).

The project *Renovation and Equipping of the Headquarters and Open Laboratories (CoE MARBLE HQ)* represents a strategic investment which will contribute to the establishment of RI of strategic importance in STEM and ICT domains. Located in Zagreb, the facility will serve as the central research hub and headquarters of CoE MARBLE and a national node for applied research, development, and innovation (RDI) in maritime technologies. This investment contributes directly to the advancement of Croatia's Smart Specialization Strategy (S3), the National Development Strategy 2030 (NDS 2030), and the Research Infrastructure Development Roadmap of the Republic of Croatia 2023–2027 (Roadmap). These strategic frameworks emphasize the need for large-scale investments in modern RIs and applied research, with the aim of fostering collaboration between science and the business sector, driving innovation, and strengthening national competitiveness. The project also aligns with the priorities of the European Green Deal and the Digital Decade, supporting Croatia's transition towards a green transition and digitalization.

The investment will focus on the renovation and equipping of CoE MARBLE's headquarters in Zagreb, transforming the existing building into a state-of-the-art research facility. The renovated premises will include office space and open laboratories tailored to advanced RDI activities, including: a prototyping laboratory, an experimental testing pool, a flying arena, a digital twin room, and a mobile laboratory.

The upgraded RI will be designed to support interdisciplinary research, accelerate innovation, and enhance cooperation between academia, public authorities, and industry stakeholders. Through structured investments in advanced equipment and purpose-built facilities, the project will create a conducive environment for knowledge creation, experimental development, and the validation of cutting-edge technologies.

CoE MARBLE will concentrate its RDI activities across four thematic areas that are critical to the future of the blue economy:

- Maritime Robotics and Autonomous Systems:

Maritime Robotics and Autonomous Systems encompass advanced robotic technologies designed to operate seamlessly across underwater, surface, and aerial domains. They integrate AI-driven sensor fusion, physics-informed neural networks, and eco-friendly mission planning to enable autonomous

inspection, surveying, and mapping of marine environments. These systems enhance real-time control and navigation, ensure safer human-robot collaboration, and support applications ranging from lifesaving interventions to ship hull inspections. By advancing autonomy in marine operations, they contribute to industry growth while preserving fragile ocean ecosystems.

- Maritime Green Endurance:

Maritime Green Endurance refers to research and innovation focused on integrating renewable and sustainable energy solutions - such as solar, wind, wave power, biochemical energy harvesting, and blue hydrogen fuel cells - into maritime operations. It enables long-term endurance of unmanned vehicles, remote power supply for aquaculture, offshore platforms, and island communities, while reducing emissions and operational costs. By combining endurance with environmental responsibility, Maritime Green Endurance supports the transition of the blue economy toward greener and more sustainable practices.

- Maritime Internet of Things (IoT):

Maritime IoT encompasses interconnected networks of sensors, actuators, and autonomous platforms designed to enable real-time data exchange in aquatic environments. By addressing challenges such as limited underwater bandwidth, acoustic signal latency, and extreme weather conditions, it leverages data-driven signal processing and secure communication protocols to ensure system resilience. Applications include smart marinas, environmental monitoring, automated aquaculture management, and disaster prevention through early warning systems. Maritime IoT enhances decision-making, operational efficiency, and safety, supporting smarter and more sustainable marine activities.

- Maritime Digital Twins:

Maritime Digital Twins are virtual replicas of oceanic and coastal environments that integrate heterogeneous data from sensors, robotics, and IoT networks into adaptive simulations. Enhanced by advanced analytics and machine learning, they enable applications such as anomaly detection, maritime spatial planning, remote maintenance, and augmented reality for underwater heritage sites. By allowing stakeholders to model scenarios, reduce risks, optimize resources, and improve decision-making, Maritime Digital Twins provide a powerful tool for advancing sustainable ocean management and innovation.

The infrastructural investment in CoE MARBLE will serve as a catalyst for the modernization of Croatia's R&I ecosystem, significantly enhancing national capabilities in marine and coastal technologies. By enabling high-impact research, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and facilitating the translation of knowledge into practice, the project will strengthen Croatia's position in the global innovation landscape. Furthermore, it will contribute directly to addressing critical societal and policy priorities, including green transition and digitalization.

**The Applicant should carefully review the Call documentation, including the accompanying annexes, as these documents provide essential clarifications and guidance for the preparation of the project proposal.**

## 2. Legal framework and governance

A grant within this Call will be awarded to the Beneficiary in accordance with the conditions set forth in the:

- Project Appraisal Document (PAD) - Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology Project - P180755<sup>1</sup>;
- The Law on the Confirmation of the Loan Agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology Project (Official Gazette (OG) 9/23)<sup>2</sup>;
- Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)<sup>3</sup>;
- Grants Operations Manual (GOM)<sup>4</sup>;
- Grant Agreement<sup>5</sup>.

The following national and EU legislation is relevant in the context of this Call:

- Law on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (OG 119/22);
- Bankruptcy Law (OG 71/15, 104/17, 36/22, 27/24);
- Law on Financial Operations and Pre-bankruptcy Settlement (OG 108/12, 144/12, 81/13, 112/13, 71/15, 78/15, 114/22);
- Companies Act (OG 111/93, 34/99, 121/99, 52/00, 118/03, 107/07, 146/08, 137/09, 111/12, 125/11, 68/13, 110/15, 40/19, 34/22, 114/22, 18/23, 130/23, 136/24);
- Corporate Income Tax Law (OG 177/04, 90/05, 57/06, 146/08, 80/10, 22/12, 148/13, 143/14, 50/16, 115/16, 106/18, 121/19, 32/20, 138/20, 114/22, 114/23, 152/24);
- Criminal Code (OG 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19, 84/21, 114/22, 114/23, 36/24);
- Criminal Code (OG 110/97, 27/98, 50/00, 129/00, 51/01, 111/03, 190/03, 105/04, 84/05, 71/06, 110/07, 152/08, 57/11, 77/11, 143/12);
- Law on Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (OG 108/17, 39/19, 151/22)
- State Aid Act (OG 47/2014, 69/17);
- Law on the Implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (OG 42/18);
- Construction Act (OG 153/13, 20/17, 39/19, 125/19, 145/24);
- Treaty on European Union and Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2016/C 202/01);
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market under of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, including its subsequent amendments regulations (hereafter: Regulation (EU) No 651/2014);
- Communication from the Commission - Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2022/C 414/01);
- Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689).

In addition to the previously established regulations, all delegated and implementing acts adopted based under them also apply.

<sup>1</sup> Project Appraisal Document (PAD), [link](#)

<sup>2</sup> Law on the confirmation of the Loan agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the "Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology" project (Official Gazette 9/23), [link](#)

<sup>3</sup> Environmental and Social Management Framework, [link](#)

<sup>4</sup> Grants Operations Manual (GOM), [link](#)

<sup>5</sup> Annex A. Template of a Grant Agreement is part of Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of projects within the DIGIT Project (Section 4.1.) of this Call for proposals

The regulations applicable to this Call are those in force at the time of its publication. This means that the Guidelines for the Applicant and annexes, and any relationships arising from the Call are subject to current legislation, including any laws and regulations that come into force later, as well as any subsequent amendments. The Applicant is responsible to verify the applicable laws at the time of submitting their project proposal, as the regulations in force at the time of submission will apply.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Youth (hereafter: MSEY) oversees the entire DIGIT Project and manages each program. The MSEY is in charge of the execution of this Call and implementation process by conducting the selection process of project proposal, preparing and signing grant agreement (and any addendums, if applicable), monitoring and the implementation of project.

### **3. Objectives and focus of the Call**

The objective of the Call is as follows:

- *Investment in research infrastructure aimed at enhancing scientific excellence, enabling the implementation of research, development and innovation activities, and strengthening collaboration with the business sector.*

The project will result in fully developed and functional research infrastructure for CoE MARBLE, enabling the following:

1. Raising the standards of the scientific and research community by developing adequate, connected, and accessible infrastructure for RDI activities, international networking, and cooperation with the business sector,
2. Supporting research, innovation, and capacity-building activities by providing the essential physical preconditions for implementation,
3. Contributing to national strategic goals related to digital and green transitions, decentralised innovation, and talent retention in high-potential R&I sectors,
4. Positioning Croatia within the European Research Area as a relevant and visible actor in applied marine research and sustainable blue technologies,
5. Supporting research outputs with strong innovation potential by providing the technical capacity for development, validation, and protection of new technologies,
6. Enhancing the scientific quality of the CoE at the national and international levels, increasing competitiveness, and facilitating access to funds from the European Structural and Investment Funds and European Commission's Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation,
7. Providing improved conditions for education, work and career development of researchers.

The main objective and expected outcomes are integrated into the Theory of Change (ToC), which serves as the logical framework for the Call, illustrated in Figure 1. The ToC outlines the expected immediate results, activities, and inputs required to achieve long-term effects. Project must align with the ToC framework. Additionally, Table 1. explains the requirements for setting project-level indicators and targets. The Applicant may propose additional indicators and targets for their project beyond those required in Table 1.

Figure 1. Theory of Change



Table 1. Results framework of the Call

Call objective: Investment in research infrastructure aimed at enhancing scientific excellence, enabling the implementation of research, development and innovation activities, and strengthening collaboration with the business sector					
Indicator label	Level	Indicator	Measurement unit	Deadline for completion	
O1	Impact	<b>Number of intellectual property applications filed</b>	application	Five years after project completion	
	The indicator refers to the number of applications for intellectual property, including patents, trademarks, industrial designs, etc., filed by the beneficiary, which are the result of activities carried out within the funded project. The target value must be achieved in the fifth year following the completion of the project implementation.				
O2	Impact	<b>Number of technology transfers realized</b>	product	Five years after project completion	
	<b>Description:</b> The indicator refers to the transfer of research results (knowledge and technology) achieved through the implementation of the project for the purpose of their further development and/or use in the development and commercialization of new products (goods or services) or processes. The results of the project can be transferred from the project beneficiary to other subjects through signed research and development contracts or intellectual property licensing				

		contracts, or by establishing new enterprises. The target value must be achieved in the fifth year following the completion of the project implementation. <b>Source of verification:</b> report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, or documentation verifying the status.		
	Impact	<b>Number of collaborative research projects contracted after project completion (between research organizations and enterprises)</b>	project	Five years after project completion
<b>O3</b>	<b>Description:</b> The indicator refers to the number of new collaborative projects between enterprises and research organizations, involving the beneficiary of the supported project, which are contracted after the completion of the supported project's implementation. The beneficiary of the supported project may be involved as either the main beneficiary or a partner in implementing the new project. The indicator takes into account projects contracted based on submitted project proposals to competitive sources of financing. The target value must be achieved in the fifth year following the completion of the project implementation. <b>Source of verification:</b> report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, document or link to a public source verifying the application status.			
<b>O4</b>	Impact	<b>Number of publications resulting from supported project (out of which: in Q1 and Q2 journals)*</b>	publication	Five years after project completion
		<b>Description:</b> The indicator measures the number of scientific publications directly resulting from activities supported by the project, including research conducted using the newly established infrastructure. It captures the scientific output and visibility of the supported research infrastructure. The target value must be achieved in the third year following the completion of the project implementation. <b>Source of verification:</b> report and/or survey during the post-implementation period.		

<b>[A] Specific objective: Increasing the intensity and quality of research, development and innovation activities through development of research infrastructure</b>				
	Outcome	<b>Number of research positions created and filled in supported entity</b>	research job position	Three years after project completion
<b>A1</b>	<b>Description:</b> This indicator captures the number of new research job positions that have been created and filled as a direct result of the project implementation. These positions must be directly linked to the use of the newly developed or upgraded research infrastructure and contribute to the execution of RDI activities. Each job position is counted individually, regardless of whether it is full-time or part-time. The target value must be achieved in the third year following the completion of the project implementation. <b>Source of verification:</b> report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, employment contracts.			
<b>A2</b>	Outcome	<b>Number of researchers working in improved research infrastructure facilities</b>	researcher	Three years after project completion

	<p><b>Description:</b> This indicator measures the number of researchers who regularly perform RDI activities in facilities that have been improved, renovated, or newly equipped through the supported project. Researchers included under this indicator must have direct and continuous access to the improved RI and use it as part of their formal research role within the supported entity. Both existing researchers who continued working within the improved RI and newly hired researchers are taken into account. Each researcher is counted individually, regardless of whether it is full-time or part-time. The target value must be achieved in the third year following the completion of the project implementation.</p> <p><b>Source of verification:</b> report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, employment contracts.</p>
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<b>[a] Output: Research infrastructure developed and operational for research, development and innovation activities</b>				
<b>Indicator label</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Measurement unit</b>	<b>Deadline for completion</b>
<b>a1</b>	Output	<b>Number of research infrastructure project completed</b>	project	Project completion
		<p><b>Description:</b> This indicator captures the number of research infrastructure projects completed with support from the Call, involving renovation and/or equipping activities aimed at improving functionality or enabling new research directions.</p> <p><b>Source of verification:</b> final report.</p>		
<b>a2</b>	Output	<b>Value of new research equipment acquired</b>	EUR	Project completion
		<p><b>Description:</b> This indicator measures the total (acquisition) value of the research equipment supported under the Call. Research equipment includes all apparatus, tools and devices used directly for conducting R&amp;D activities. It does not include, for instance, chemical substances or other consumable materials used for carrying out experiments or other research activities. The target value must be achieved by the completion of the project implementation.</p> <p><b>Source of verification:</b> implementation reports and final report.</p>		

The Applicant is required to include and set target values for indicators O1, O2, O3 and O4 and A1 and A2. However, indicators a1 and a2 will be monitored by MSEY at the Call level, and therefore the Applicant is not required to set target values for those indicators in the project application.

## 4. Evaluation of the Call

If the MSEY decides to conduct an impact evaluation of the Call, surveys will be administered after project completion and in subsequent years, with the purpose of collecting data on the results achieved by the Applicant. By applying to this Call, the Applicant commits to participating in these surveys, should the MSEY decide to conduct them, and consent to the use of collected data for impact evaluation purposes, regardless of whether they receive support or not. This consent is also provided through the signed declaration by the Applicant (Annex II. of this document). The MSEY will ensure that any future surveys do not create an undue administrative burden for respondents, also ensuring the adherence to the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) particularly with regards to purpose limitation and data minimization principles.

## 5. Eligible Applicant

The eligible Applicant for this Call is the **Center of Excellence MARBLE limited liability company for research and development**.

The Applicant must demonstrate that it is not in an exclusion situation at the time of project proposal submission, as defined in the Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of projects within the DIGIT Project (Section 1.1.).

The Applicant must also meet the definition of research organization in line with Annex D. as part of Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of projects within the DIGIT Project.

The Applicant is submitting the project independently, without any project partners.

## 6. Budget of the Call and the intensity of grant support

The budget allocation planned for this Call is **EUR 13,006,101.91**.

The grant awarded to the Applicant that meets the definition of a research organization as defined in the Communication from the Commission – Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2022/C 414/01), Chapter 1.3, point 16. (ff), is not considered state aid. In such circumstances, the grant intensity for eligible project costs may reach up to 100%, taking into account the maximum grant amount that can be awarded for the project.

The funds awarded to the beneficiary through direct award under this Call are intended exclusively for the activities and costs specified herein and do not constitute State aid.

The Applicant is required to ensure coverage of the difference between the total value of the project and the awarded grant amount, if applicable.

A research organization is not considered a recipient of State aid if it does not meet the criteria for being classified as an enterprise. These criteria are independent of its legal status - whether it is established under public or private law - or of its economic nature, i.e., whether or not it seeks to generate profit.

In cases where the same entity engages in both economic and non-economic activities, under this Call the award of grant (up to 100%) is possible only for the financing of non-economic activities, provided that the research organization clearly separates the two types of activities, their costs, financing, and revenues, in order to effectively avoid cross-subsidization of economic activities. In such cases, the separation of economic and non-economic activities (allocation of costs, sources of financing, and revenues) must be introduced and further reflected in the gross balance sheet and annual financial statements of the relevant entity.

The Applicant is required to review and apply the rules set out in Annex D. Guidelines related to the application of state aid rules, which forms part of Annex I.

## 7. Project duration

The project should be scheduled to be completed within **36 months**. All project activities and payments must be completed by October 31, 2028.

## 8. Eligibility of project, activities and costs

This section defines the eligibility requirements for the projects, including the types of eligible projects, activities that can be funded, and the specific costs that qualify for funding under the Call.

### 8.1. Eligible project

The general eligibility criteria for the project are as follows:

- The project has a prepared feasibility study with a cost-benefit analysis;
- The project must be in accordance with the objective of the Call and must contribute to the results framework of the Call (ToC);
- The project is implemented within an eligible geographical area, on the territory of the Republic of Croatia;
- The project team is defined in the project proposal;
- The project is not physically or financially completed, nor will it be completed before the signing of the Grant Agreement;
- The project is ready to start activities, with an anticipated duration of up to 36 months, ensuring that all activities and payments are completed by October 31, 2028;
- The project includes eligible activities and costs;
- The project is implemented at a location that is either owned by the Applicant or for which the Applicant holds the right of use of the property.
- The project activities are neither listed on the International Finance Corporation (IFC) exclusion list of activities, nor otherwise excluded by the ESMF as described in Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of projects within the DIGIT Project;
- The amount of requested grant is within the prescribed allowable amount of grant funds;
- The project respects the principle of non-cumulativeness, i.e. it does not represent double financing;
- The project is in accordance with Horizontal principles and Ethics as described in Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of projects within the DIGIT Project;
- The project can be classified as having no more than moderate risk for environmental and social impacts, based on the WB's environmental and social policies criteria and the ESMF (Section 3.3 Risk Classification Guidelines), as described in Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of projects within the DIGIT Project.

### 8.2. Eligible activities

Eligible activities are as follows:

- **Preparation of technical (design) documentation:** Activities under this component include the development of all necessary project-technical documentation required for the implementation of renovation works and equipment. This encompasses architectural, engineering, and utility design, in compliance with national regulations and WB environmental and social standards. The documentation will serve as the basis for procurement and execution of renovation works and equipment. Applicant must submit documentation for the MSEY approval before starting the procurement of works and equipment. As a complementary activity, design supervision is also considered eligible. This includes the engagement of authorized

design supervisors to ensure that the construction works are carried out in full compliance with the approved technical documentation.

- **Renovation works:** This activity includes the execution of civil works for the renovation of the existing buildings, including landscaping and external site development works. Works must be conducted in accordance with the approved design by MSEY and any relevant authorities, relevant permits (if applicable), and applicable regulations. The activity may commence only after MSEY issues its approval to the technical (design) documentation. It also includes professional supervision services to ensure that construction is implemented in full compliance with the design and relevant standards. This encompasses the engagement of a construction site manager, an occupational health and safety coordinator, and technical supervision experts responsible for overseeing quality, regulatory conformity, and workplace safety throughout the implementation of works.
- **Purchase and installation of equipment:** Includes the procurement, delivery, and installation of equipment necessary for the operationalization of the RI and administrative functions of the CoE MARBLE headquarters.
  - **Purchase and installation of scientific equipment,**
  - **Purchase and installation of non-scientific equipment (office and other special equipment).**

This activity may commence only after MSEY issues its approval to the technical (design) documentation.

- **Promotion and visibility:** Activities aimed at raising awareness of the project and its outcomes among stakeholders and the public. This includes organizing events, and other promotional activities to showcase the project's impact and relevance.
- **Project management:** Covering all administrative and managerial aspects necessary for the successful execution of the project, including planning, coordination, monitoring, and reporting.

### **8.3. Eligible and ineligible costs**

The project must not represent double funding. All the costs must meet the following criteria:

- They are incurred between June 1, 2025 and October 31, 2028;
- They are connected with the project and specified in the budget plan of the project;
- They are identifiable and verifiable, particularly through being recorded in the accounting records of the Applicant and are determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles; and
- They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Only the costs explicitly listed in Table 2. are eligible for funding under this Call.

Table 2. Eligible costs

Activities	Eligible costs	Funding category
Preparation of technical (design) documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs of preparing project technical (design) documentation for renovation works;</li> <li>Project design supervision.</li> </ul>	Grant for research organization
Renovation works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs of civil works in accordance with the Construction Act (OG 153/13, 20/17, 39/19, 125/19, 145/24);</li> <li>Costs of technical supervision of works, construction site manager, occupational health and safety coordinator;</li> <li>Necessary and essential costs for all utility connections and/or the relocation of communal infrastructure (e.g., construction and connection of a new transformer station, procurement of additional electrical power capacity, costs of connection to water supply installations) and technical inspections;</li> <li>Costs of landscaping, site development and external works.</li> </ul>	Grant for research organization
Purchase and installation of equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs of purchasing, renting, or upgrading instruments and research equipment (including furniture and IT equipment);</li> <li>Costs of purchasing licences and software solutions.</li> </ul>	Grant for research organization
Promotion and visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of design and production of promotional materials, such as brochures, posters, and flyers;</li> <li>Costs of developing online and video content, including website page;</li> <li>Costs of professional services for press releases, media outreach, and PR campaigns to enhance project visibility.</li> </ul>	Grant for research organization
Project management and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs of consultancy services for project management;</li> <li>Contingency reserve: A contingency reserve of up to 7% of the civil works (excluding the contingency reserve itself) may be included to address unforeseen expenses related to renovation works. The use of this reserve is subject to prior approval and is limited to justified and documented cases.</li> </ul>	Grant for research organization

**Non-refundable VAT is considered an eligible cost. Applicant must increase each cost item in the budget by the amount of non-refundable VAT, if and where applicable.**

The following costs are not eligible:

- Costs incurred outside the eligibility period, from June 1, 2025 to October 31, 2028;
- Purchase, rent, or leasing of land and existing buildings;
- Cost of work and personal vehicles, as well as the cost of vessels used for commercial purposes;
- Interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- Bank charges, costs of guarantees and similar charges;
- Credits to third parties;
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- Exchange losses;
- Refundable VAT;
- Fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary

component for achieving the outcomes of the project; and

- Excessive or reckless expenditure.

## 9. Instructions for the submission of project proposals

Please follow these instructions carefully to ensure your project proposal is properly submitted and considered:

- Access the application portal eDIGIT: The Applicant must create a user account on the designated portal eDIGIT if not already registered. This account will be used throughout the application process.
- Complete the application note form: Log in to the portal and accurately fill out the form. The content of the application form is provided in Annex III. of this document.
- Upload the required documents as outlined in the table below.

Table 3. Submission of supporting documents

Document	Mandatory (yes/no)	Notes and document format
<b>Declaration by the Applicant</b>	Yes	Completed, signed, and stamped Annex II. (.pdf format) (English)
<b>Statute or other relevant act proving the status of the research organization</b>	Yes (if not publicly available)	If it is not publicly available, the statute (or other relevant document) must be provided for the Applicant that is a research organization as defined in Communication from the Commission – Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2022/C 414/01), Chapter 1.3, point 16. (ff) <sup>6</sup> . The statute or other relevant document must be submitted as a signed and scanned document (.pdf or .zip format (if multiple documents are required)) (English or Croatian).
<b>Proof of ownership or equivalent document</b>	Yes	The Applicant is required to submit a proof of ownership of the Brodarski institute property (if applicable) or an equivalent document proving the right to use the property in case the Applicant is not the owner. The document must be submitted in .pdf format, as a scan of the original in English or Croatian.
<b>Feasibility study with a cost-benefit analysis</b>	Yes	The Applicant must submit a completed feasibility study, including a cost-benefit analysis, as a key supporting document. This document must provide a detailed technical, economic, and financial justification for the proposed investment, demonstrating its relevance, sustainability, and alignment with the project's objectives. The cost-benefit analysis should quantify expected costs and benefits, identify risks, and assess the project's financial and socio-economic impact. The document must follow the guidelines from the European Commission: Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis of Investment Projects Economic appraisal tool for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 <sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=HR](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=HR)

<sup>7</sup> Guide to CBA 2014-2020, [link](#)

		and Economic Appraisal Vademecum 2021–2027: General Principles and Sector Applications <sup>8</sup> . The document must be submitted in English in searchable .pdf format.
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4. Review and finalize submission: Ensure all sections of the application form are fully completed, as well as supporting documents. Incomplete proposal may be disqualified from the evaluation process.
5. Submit the project proposal: Once all required information and documents are prepared and uploaded, submit the project proposal via the portal. Ensure the submission is completed before the specified deadline. The project proposal can be submitted by a person authorized to represent the Applicant or by the project manager, who must be an employee of the Applicant.
6. Confirmation of submission: After successfully submitting the project proposal, the Applicant will receive a submission confirmation. This confirmation should be retained as proof of submission.

Important notes:

- Submission deadline: Project proposal submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. It is advisable to complete the submission process well in advance of the deadline.
- Electronic submission only: Project proposal submission must be made through the designated portal. E-mail or paper submissions are not accepted.
- Completeness and accuracy: The information provided in the project proposal must be complete and accurate. The MSEY may request additional information if needed.

## 10. Timetable and deadlines

The project proposal can be submitted from October 2, 2025 (starting at 14:00) until, ~~December 12, 2025~~, **December 19, 2025** (deadline for submission at 16:00). Project proposal submitted after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

The indicative timetable and deadlines are outlined in the Table 3.

*Table 4. Indicative timetable and deadlines*

Indicative timetable and deadlines	
Call opening	October 2, 2025, 14:00:00
Submission deadline	<del>December 12, 2025</del> <b>December 19, 2025</b> , 16:00:00
Project proposal evaluation results	30 days from the closing of the Call
Grant Agreement signing	60 days from the closing of the Call

## 11. Grant award process

For this Call, funding will be provided to the project that meets the administrative, eligibility, and quality criteria and achieve the minimum required score. The process from submission to Grant Agreement signing is shown in the following chart.

<sup>8</sup> Vademecum 2021-2027, [link](#)

The process from submission to Grant Agreement signing is shown in the following chart.

Figure 2. Grant award process



The stages in the grant award process for this Call are explained in the Section 2. of the Annex I., and the Applicant is strongly encouraged to review it thoroughly.

## 12. Other information

Any questions regarding the Call must be submitted through the application portal, eDIGIT by selecting the relevant Call (DIGIT.1.1.03) on the portal. The MSEY will address these questions through Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section. The FAQ will be published on the DIGIT Project website.

## 13. Data protection

The protection of personal data is governed by the provisions of the Law on the Implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (OG 42/18).

Personal data collected includes information about the Applicant or authorized representative (name, surname, OIB, email, phone number). During the grant award process, all personal information is kept confidential. Data related to stakeholders (name, surname, OIB, salary, etc.) involved in project implementation may also be collected. These data are processed for the purposes of project preparation, evaluation, implementation, and auditing.

Personal data may be shared:

- Within the bodies implementing and monitoring the DIGIT Project;
- With individuals authorized by the aforementioned bodies to perform specific services.

Access to personal data is restricted to those with a legitimate need for it.

The Applicant and Beneficiary have the following rights regarding the protection of personal data:

- The right to access their personal data, i.e., the right to request confirmation of whether data are being processed and, if so, to request access and information on the processing as well as a copy of the processed personal data;
- The right to rectify inaccurate data and to supplement incomplete data;
- The right to request erasure of personal data if such data are no longer necessary for the purposes for which they were collected, if they have been unlawfully processed, or after the expiry of the data retention period;
- The right to restrict the processing of personal data;
- The right to object to the processing of personal data;
- The right to file a complaint with the Croatian Personal Data Protection Agency.

Personal data will be stored for as long as necessary to fulfill the purpose for which it was collected, and for no longer than five years after the closure of the DIGIT Project.

Contact details of the Data Protection Officer: [SzZOP@mzom.hr](mailto:SzZOP@mzom.hr), Donje Svetice 38, 10000 Zagreb, tel: +385 1 4594 294.

## **14. Grievance Redress Mechanism**

The MSEY is responsible for the establishment of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for receiving and facilitating the resolution of complaints and concerns presented by the Applicant, Beneficiary, and any individuals, groups, or communities who are affected, may be affected, or have an interest in the activities of the projects and the DIGIT Project.

The GRM is also intended to prevent and mitigate the risk of corruption, limit the risk of conflict between the Beneficiary, contracted subjects (for works, services or goods), and the community, mitigate environmental and social risks and impacts, and allow stakeholders to provide practical suggestions and opinions to ensure that the Call remains accountable and transparent to the Beneficiary. The GRM is designed to capture complaints and refer them to the relevant sectors for resolution within reasonable time frames.

Contact details of the MSEY GRM – a) e-mail address: [grmdigit@mzom.hr](mailto:grmdigit@mzom.hr); or b) postal address: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i mladih, Uprava za znanost i tehnologiju, Sektor za programe i projekte Europske Unije, Donje Svetice 38, 10000 Zagreb.

## **15. List of annexes**

- 1) Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of projects within the DIGIT Project
- 2) Annex II. Declaration by the Applicant
- 3) Annex III. Application form