



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



CALL FOR PROPOSAL FOR THE DIRECT AWARD CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPPING OF RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB FACULTY OF ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATICS – FOI 2

CALL REFERENCE NUMBER: DIGIT.1.1.05

GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICANT

April 2026



Table of Contents

- ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS 3
- DEFINITIONS 4
- 1. ABOUT THE CONTEXT OF THE CALL 5
- 2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GOVERNANCE 6
- 3. OBJECTIVES AND FOCUS OF THE CALL 7
- 4. EVALUATION OF THE CALL 10
- 5. ELIGIBLE APPLICANT 11
- 6. BUDGET OF THE CALL AND THE INTENSITY OF GRANT SUPPORT 11
- 7. PROJECT DURATION 12
- 8. ELIGIBILITY OF PROJECT, ACTIVITIES AND COSTS 12
 - 8.1. ELIGIBLE PROJECT 12
 - 8.2. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES 13
 - 8.3. ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS 13
- 9. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL 15
- 10. TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES 16
- 11. GRANT AWARD PROCESS 16
- 12. OTHER INFORMATION 17
- 13. DATA PROTECTION 17
- 14. GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM 17
- 15. LIST OF ANNEXES 18

Abbreviations and Acronyms

DIGIT	Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology Project
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
EU	European Union
EUR	euro (currency)
FAQ	frequently asked questions
FOI	University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GOM	Grants Operations Manual
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICT	information and communication technology
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IP	Intellectual Property
MSEY	Ministry of Science, Education and Youth
NDS	National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia 2030
OG	Official Gazette
RDI	research, development and innovation
RI	research infrastructure
RO	Research organization
R&I	research and innovation
S3	Smart Specialization Strategy 2029
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
VAT	value added tax
WB	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.
- «Call for proposal» 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 proposal issued by MSEY. It is awarded to an eligible Beneficiary for 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 implementation of 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* program under the DIGIT Project. This Call for proposal DIGIT.1.1.05 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 proposal for the direct award *Construction and Equipping of Research Infrastructure of the University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics – FOI 2* (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 University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics (hereafter: FOI).

The project *Construction and Equipping of Research Infrastructure of the University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics – FOI 2* (hereafter: Project) represents a strategic national investment aimed at strengthening research infrastructure in the field of information sciences, within the broader area of social sciences.

The Project focuses on constructing and equipping a new purpose-built facility in Varaždin, Republic of Croatia, thereby establishing modern, efficient, and technically advanced research and innovation spaces at FOI. The newly developed research infrastructure will provide a significantly strengthened basis for interdisciplinary research activities and create improved conditions for collaboration with other research organizations, higher education institutions, public authorities, and industry partners. This will support the broader integration of scientific knowledge into practical applications in information systems development, data-driven decision-making, digital transformation, and the design of innovative ICT solutions.

By developing and modernising its research infrastructure, FOI will enhance its ability to participate competitively in national and international research, development, and innovation (RDI) programmes, strengthen the translation of scientific results into operational and policy-relevant digital solutions, and reinforce Croatia's overall capacity to address key societal and economic challenges through advanced digital technologies and evidence-based innovation.

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 - P180755¹;
- 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)²;
- Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)³;
- Grants Operations Manual (GOM)⁴;
- Grant Agreement⁵.

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

- Law on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (OG 119/22);
- 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)
- Law on Public Procurement (OG 120/16, 114/22);
- State Aid Act (OG 47/2014, 69/17);
- Law on the Implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (OG 42/18);
- 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.

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.

¹ Project Appraisal Document (PAD), [link](#)

² 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](#)

³ Environmental and Social Management Framework, [link](#)

⁴ Grants Operations Manual (GOM), [link](#)

⁵ Annex A. Template of a Grant Agreement is part of Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of the project within the DIGIT Project (Section 4.1.) of this Call for proposal

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 a fully developed and functional RI for the FOI, enabling the following:

- a) 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;
- b) Supporting research, innovation, and capacity-building activities by providing the essential physical preconditions for implementation;
- c) Contributing to national strategic goals related to digital and green transitions, decentralised innovation, and talent retention in high-potential R&I sectors;
- d) Positioning Croatia within the European Research Area as a relevant and visible actor in applied research in information sciences;
- e) Supporting research outputs with strong innovation potential by providing the technical capacity for development, validation, and protection of new technologies;
- f) Enhancing the scientific quality of the FOI at the national and international levels, increasing competitiveness, and facilitating access to funds from the European Structural and Investment Funds and the European Commission's Framework Programs for Research and Innovation;
- g) Providing improved conditions for education, work and career development of researchers.

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 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

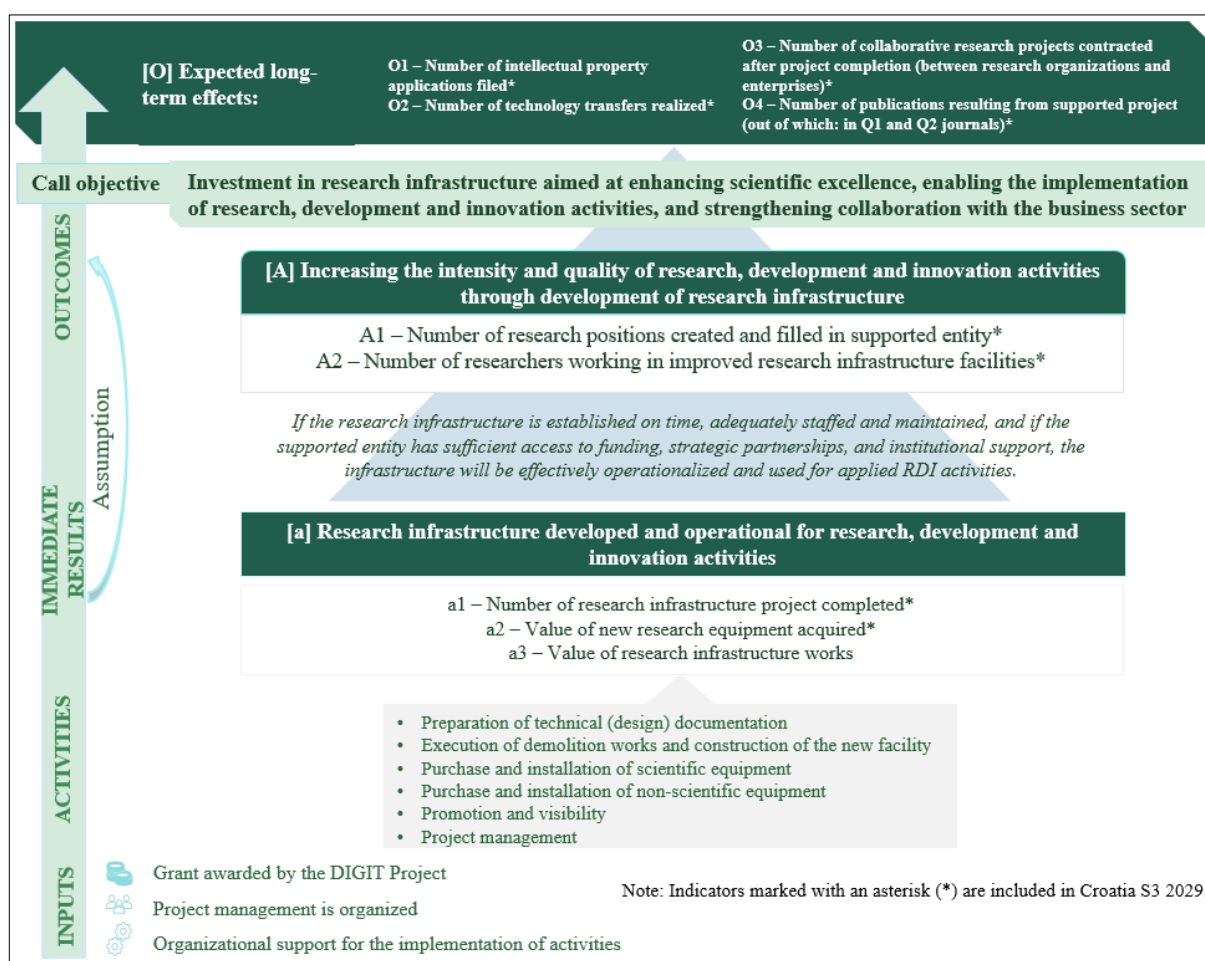


Table 1. Results framework of the Call

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	Number of intellectual property applications filed	application	Five years after project completion	
	The indicator refers to the number of applications for intellectual property (IP), 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. Source of verification: report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, document or link to a public source verifying the application status.				
O2	Impact	Number of technology transfers realized	product	Five years after project completion	
	Description: 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 IP licensing contracts, or by				

	<p>establishing new enterprises. The target value must be achieved in the fifth year following the completion of the project implementation.</p> <p>Source of verification: report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, or documentation verifying the status.</p>			
O3	Impact	Number of collaborative research projects contracted after project completion (between research organizations and enterprises)	project	Five years after project completion
	<p>Description: 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.</p> <p>Source of verification: report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, document or link to a public source verifying the application status.</p>			
O4	Impact	Number of publications resulting from supported project (out of which: in Q1 and Q2 journals)	publication	Five years after project completion
	<p>Description: 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 fifth year following the completion of the project implementation.</p> <p>Source of verification: report and/or survey during the post-implementation period.</p>			

[A] Specific objective: Increasing the intensity and quality of research, development and innovation activities through development of research infrastructure

A1	Outcome	Number of research positions created and filled in supported entity	research job position	Three years after project completion
	<p>Description: 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.</p> <p>Source of verification: report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, employment contracts.</p>			
A2	Outcome	Number of researchers working in improved research infrastructure facilities	researcher	Three years after project completion

	<p>Description: This indicator measures the number of researchers who regularly perform RDI activities in facilities that have been improved, renovated, or newly built and 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>Source of verification: report and/or survey during the post-implementation period, employment contracts.</p>
--	--

[a] Output: Research infrastructure developed and operational for research, development and innovation activities				
Indicator label	Level	Indicator	Measurement unit	Deadline for completion
a1	Output	Number of research infrastructure project completed	project	Project completion
	<p>Description: This indicator captures the number of research infrastructure projects completed with support from the Call, involving the construction of new facilities and/or equipping activities that improve research functionality or enable new research directions.</p> <p>Source of verification: final report.</p>			
a2	Output	Value of new research equipment acquired	EUR	Project completion
	<p>Description: 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&D activities. It does not include, for instance, chemical substances or other consumable materials used for carrying out experiments or other research activities. The final achieved value at project completion will depend on the actual scope of procured and installed research equipment.</p> <p>Source of verification: implementation reports and final report.</p>			
a3	Output	Value of research infrastructure works	EUR	Project completion
	<p>Description: This indicator measures the total value of works related to the construction of new research infrastructure supported under the Call. Research infrastructure works include demolition works, construction works, installation of building systems, interior finishing works, and other construction-related activities necessary to establish fully functional research and innovation facilities. The final achieved value at project completion will depend on the actual scope of executed works, as confirmed through interim and final payment certificates and recorded in the implementation reports and the final report.</p> <p>Source of verification: implementation reports and final report.</p>			

The Applicant is required to include and set target values for all indicators except indicator a1. Indicator a1 will be monitored by the MSEY at the Call level, and therefore the Applicant is not required to set a target value for this indicator 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 **University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics**.

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 the project 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 the project 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 20,000,000.00**.

The grant awarded to the Applicant/Beneficiary 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 grant awarded to the Applicant/Beneficiary through direct award under this Call is intended solely for the activities and costs specified herein.

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 in a way that ensures the completion of all activities and payments no later than 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 and fully prepared technical documentation for the construction works for RI, including a building permit;
- 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 has already commenced or is fully ready to start its activities, ensuring that all activities and payments are completed by October 31, 2028;
- The project includes eligible activities and costs;
- 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 the project 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 the project 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 2.3 Risk Classification Guidelines), as described in Annex I. Conditions for the preparation and implementation of the project within the DIGIT Project.

8.2. Eligible activities

Eligible activities are as follows:

- **Preparation of technical (design) documentation:** This includes the preparation of all required technical and design documentation necessary for the execution of demolition and construction works.
- **Execution of demolition works and construction of the new facility:** This includes all demolition, construction, installation, and finishing works necessary for the establishment of the new research infrastructure. As part of this activity, the following professional services are also included: construction supervision, the construction site manager, and the occupational health and safety coordinator (Phase 2), in line with national legal requirements.
- **Purchase and installation of equipment:** This includes the procurement, delivery, and installation of equipment necessary for the operationalization of the RI and for supporting the administrative functions of the Applicant:
 - Purchase and installation of scientific equipment,
 - Purchase and installation of non-scientific equipment.
- **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:** This includes all administrative and managerial activities required for the successful implementation of the project, such as planning, coordination, financial management, monitoring, reporting, and ensuring compliance with procurement.

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 January 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"> Costs of preparing technical and design documentation required for the execution of works. 	Grant for research organization
Execution of demolition works and construction of the new facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of civil works in accordance with the Construction Act (OG 153/13, 20/17, 39/19, 125/19, 145/24, 155/25); Costs of construction supervision, construction site manager, and the occupational health and safety coordinator (Phase 2), as required under national legislation and necessary to ensure compliance with technical, regulatory, and safety standards during the execution of works. 	Grant for research organization
Purchase and installation of equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of purchasing, upgrading, delivery, and installation of scientific equipment, including all components necessary for its full functionality; Costs of purchasing, delivery, and installation of non-scientific equipment, such as office furniture, IT equipment, and other specialised equipment required for the functioning of the research infrastructure and administrative functions of the Applicant; Costs of purchasing software licences and digital solutions. 	Grant for research organization
Promotion and visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of designing and producing promotional materials, such as brochures, posters, flyers, and other communication tools; Costs of developing online and audiovisual content, including updates to the project webpage, short videos, and digital communication materials; Costs of professional communication services, including press releases, media outreach, and PR activities aimed at increasing project visibility; Costs related to the organization of workshops, conferences, and dissemination events connected to the results of project implementation, including venue rental, coordination and technical services, and catering. 	Grant for research organization
Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of consultancy services for project management; Costs of consultancy services for the preparation and implementation of procurement. 	Grant for research organization

Non-refundable VAT is considered an eligible cost. The 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, i.e., before January 1, 2025, or after 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 the project proposal

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Upload the required documents as outlined in the table below.

Table 3. Submission of supporting documents

Document	Mandatory (yes/no)	Notes and document format
Declaration by the Applicant	Yes	Completed, signed, and stamped Annex II. (.pdf format) (English).
Feasibility study with a cost-benefit analysis	Yes	The Applicant must submit a completed feasibility study, including a cost-benefit analysis. This document must provide 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 ⁶ and Economic Appraisal Vademecum 2021–2027: General Principles and Sector Applications ⁷ . The document must be submitted in English or Croatian in searchable .pdf format.
Project procurement plan	Yes	Completed Annex IV. (in .xls or .xlsx format)

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

⁶ Guide to CBA 2014-2020, [link](#)

⁷ Vademecum 2021-2027, [link](#)

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 April 22, 2026 (starting at 16:00) until May 15, 2026 (deadline for submission at 14:00). Project proposal submitted after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

The indicative timetable and deadlines are outlined in Table 3.

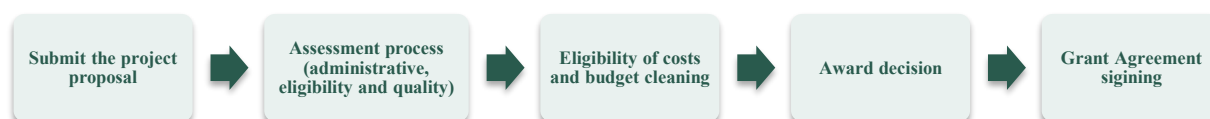
Table 4. Indicative timetable and deadlines

Indicative timetable and deadlines	
Start date for receiving project proposal	April 22, 2026, 16:00:00
Submission deadline	May 15, 2026, 14:00:00
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

Funding under this Call will be provided to the project proposal that meets all administrative, eligibility and quality criteria. The process from proposal 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 Section 2. of 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.1.1.05) 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, 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; 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 the project within the DIGIT Project
- 2) Annex II. Declaration by the Applicant
- 3) Annex III. Application form
- 4) Annex IV. Project procurement plan