



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Ministry of Regional
Development and EU Funds

Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants

"LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION" PROGRAMME

Open call for proposals

**"Strengthening STEM skills in primary schools and
development of Regional Science Centres for STEM education
in primary schools"**

Modality: temporary call



Opening date: 29/4/2021

Deadlines for submission of the project proposals:

Component A - 28/7/2021

Component B - 27/8/2021

Note: The Croatian version is the official document. In case of any discrepancies between the two versions, the Croatian version is the one that prevails.

The consolidated text after first amendment of the Call published on 15.6.2021.



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INTRODUCTION

General provisions of the Call and legal basis

The Call for proposals (hereafter referred to as “Call”) outlines the general provisions for the award of grant within the Programme “Local Development and Poverty Reduction” financed by the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 (hereafter referred to as: EEA Grants) in the Republic of Croatia.

This Call is in accordance with the Programme Agreement “Local Development and Poverty Reduction” and the EEA Regulation for the period 2014 - 2021, in particular with the Article 7.3 of this Regulation, as well in accordance with the national strategic and legislative framework related to the programme and sectoral competences.

The Programme “Local Development and Poverty Reduction” (hereafter referred to as: LDPR Programme) is in line with the following legal and strategic framework:

Regulation	Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Areas (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, it defines the general rules governing the operation of the EEA by a Financial Mechanism for the current financial period. Available for download at: https://eeagrants.org/resources/regulation-implementation-eea-grants-2014-2021
Memorandum of Understanding	The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway, and the Republic of Croatia defines the legal, financial, thematic, and the organizational framework for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism in the Republic of Croatia. Available for download at: https://eeagrants.org/resources/croatia-memorandum-understanding-eea-grants-2014-2021 .
The Act on approving the EEA Memorandum of Understanding	By the Act on approving the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette of No 7/18 — International Treaties), the Croatian Parliament adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and all its provisions. The Croatian version is available at: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/medunarodni/full/2018_10_7_56.html



The Programme Agreement	The Programme Agreement „Local development and Poverty Reduction“ was concluded on 16 September 2020 between the National Focal Point, the Financial Mechanism Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway. It defines the legal, financial, thematic and organizational framework for the implementation of the Programme. Available at: https://eeagrants.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PA-Annex-I-II-scan.pdf
MCS Decision	The Decision establishing the management and control systems (DMCS) for the use of the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2014-2021 (Official Gazette No 58/18) defines the authorities in the management and control system in the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms. Available at: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2018_06_58_1189.html
Programme Implementation Agreement (PIA)	Decision on the Programme Implementation Agreement of the “Local Development and Poverty Reduction” Programme adopted by the Minister for Regional Development and EU Funds. https://eeagrants.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Odluka-o-provedbi-Programa-Lokalni-razvoj-i-smanjenje-siromastva.pdf
The Financial Guidance	The Financial guideline for the implementation of the financial management and reporting under the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021. Available for download at: https://eeagrants.org/resources/2014-2021-financial-guidance .
Communication from the Commission	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions „School development and excellent teaching for a great start in life“ (SWD(2017) 165 final) defines the broad lines of EU policies in the field of pre-school, primary and secondary education. Available for download at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/hr/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2017%3A248%3AFIN
Council Conclusions	Council Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching (2017/C 421/03) defines the positions of the Council of the EU in the field of pre-school, primary and secondary education. Available for download at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017XG1208%2801%29
The Croatian Strategy for Education, Science and Technology	The Croatian Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (Official Gazette No 124/14) is a document defining national investment policy in the education system. The Croatian version is available on the following link: http://novebojeznanja.hr/UserDocsImages/datoteke/KB_web.pdf



Education Act	<p>The Primary and Secondary School Education Act (Official Gazette No 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 152/14, 07/17, 68/18, 98/19, 64/20), governs the activity of the primary and secondary education in public institutions in Republic of Croatia.</p> <p>https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoji-i-obrazovanje/zakon-o-odgoju-i-obrazovanju-u-osnovnoj-i-srednjoj-skoli/595</p>
Strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014 - 2020)	<p>The Strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020) is a fundamental document that enables a sustainable and common approach of all relevant stakeholders to tackle poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>The Croatian version is available on the following link: https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/ZPPI/Strategije/Strategija%20borbe%20protiv%20siroma%C5%A1tva.pdf</p>
Results Guideline 2014-2021	<p>Results Guideline provides the relevant stakeholders – National Focal Points, Programme Operators, Donor Programme Partners, project promoters, donor project partners, and staff of the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) secretariat –with the rules and obligations to complement the Regulation, and to assist them with recommendations in designing, implementing and reporting on programmes. Available for download at: https://eeagrants.org/resources/2014-2021-results-guideline</p>
Other applicable sectoral acts and specific regulations.	



GLOSSARY

Applicant – any private or public entity submitting a grant application to this Call.

Applicant's/partner statement – a statement by which an applicant/partner guarantees the veracity of the information provided in the grant application, absence of double funding and complying with the pre-conditions for participating in the award procedure.

Call for Proposals - a procedure by which potential applicants are invited to prepare and submit grant applications for financing according to pre-defined criteria and procedures.

Communication Plan - a planning document setting out information and communication activities during and, if applicable, after the implementation of the project.

Cost - amount of resources, expressed in currency, employed for purpose of implementation of one or more project activities and/or achieving one or more project results.

The Donor Programme Partner– the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (DIKU), an agency responsible for supporting the Programme Operator during implementation of the Programme.

Donor States - EEA Member States that provide funding through the EEA and the Norway Grants, namely Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway.

Educational worker – educational worker in primary education institutions in Croatia, in accordance with the Education Act. This refers to school principals, teachers, expert associates, and other educational experts in primary schools.

Evaluation Committee - a Committee appointed by the Programme Operator for the purpose of conducting the quality assessment phase and project selection.

Final Beneficiary - an individual and/or organisation that is not directly involved in the project implementation but has an indirect benefit from the project.

The Financial Mechanisms Office - the entity that assists the Financial Mechanism Committee in the management of the EEA Grants.

Funding Decision - the decision adopted by the Programme Operator that defines the provisions of funding eligible costs of the approved project by the EEA Grants and the Croatian state budget, and which is the basis for the conclusion of the Project Contract.



Grant application – a formal request for funding submitted by the applicant, composed of the Application form and other annexes and documents prescribed by the Call.

National Focal Point - the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, Directorate for Strategic Planning and Coordination of EU Funds, Sector for EU Programmes and International Financial Mechanisms Service for Coordination of EU Programmes and Programming of International Financial Mechanisms, as the national body responsible for overall implementation of Financial mechanisms for the period from 2014-2021 and for the implementation, monitoring, verification and evaluation of individual programmes and projects within the Financial Mechanisms. As such, it is responsible for monitoring the work of the Programme Operator.

Partner - any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, that is using part of the project funds and is actively involved in project implementation, carrying out project activities entrusted to it, in line with the Partnership Agreement between the Project Promoter and the Partner. The Partner must comply with all conditions applicable to the Project Promoter, except for the conditions relating to the legal entity type.

Partnership Agreement - an agreement governing mutual rights and obligations between the Project Promoter and the Project Partners. Under the Call, the Partnership Agreement is concluded in accordance with Annex 1.

Programme Operator - the Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds, Directorate for Strategic Planning and Coordination of EU Funds, Sector for EU Programmes and International Financial Mechanisms, Service for Management, Monitoring and Evaluation of EU Programmes and International Financial Mechanisms, as the body responsible for preparation and implementation of the LDPR Programme.

Project Contract - a contract concluded between the Project Promoter and the Programme Operator, defining the maximum funds allocated to the project from EEA Grants and the state budget, and setting out other financial and implementation conditions.

Partnership Declaration – a statement by which the applicant and envisaged project partners declare their intent to form a partnership in the event of the grant application being selected for funding and by which they outline their roles and responsibilities in the project.

Project Participant – an individual who has a direct benefit from the project activities, for which the cost is incurred and is identified by the collected personal data.



Project Promoter - an entity formally responsible for submitting the proposal and implementing the project under the LDPR Programme. It is responsible for submitting interim and final reports to the Programme Operator and generally managing all activities related to project implementation, monitoring and conclusion.

Project - a set of undividable activities that meet the specific purpose and is clearly linked to the expected outcomes and outputs of the Programme.

Pupils with special educational needs - in accordance with Article 62 of the Education Act, pupils with special educational needs are:

- gifted pupils, and
- pupils with difficulties.

Gifted pupil – in line with the Regulations on primary education of gifted pupils (Official Gazette No 34/91), gifted pupils possess a combination of features which enable them to accomplish continuous achievements of excellent results in one or more areas of personal activity, caused by highly developed individual capacities, personal motivation, and external encouragement. A gifted pupil possesses characteristics of three elementary groups: more than average general or specific competencies, motivation, and a high degree of creativity.

Pupil with difficulties - in accordance with Article 65 of the Education Act, pupils with difficulties are:

- pupils with disabilities
- pupils with learning, behaviour, and emotional difficulties
- pupils with educational, social, economic, cultural, and/or linguistic disadvantages

Regional Science Centres for STEM education in primary schools - an informal form of cooperation between schools, local and regional self-government units and other interested stakeholders (including the Republic of Croatia) who would establish their own premises and conduct specialized activities for pupils at the local or regional level. More details are provided in this Call.

STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics - transversal and basic knowledge and skills of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (The Croatian Education, Science and Technology Strategy, Official Gazette No 124/14).

Target Group - organisations or individuals directly affected by the project, directly involved in project implementation achieving measurable and tangible benefits from the project.



1. “LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION” PROGRAMME

1.1. About the “Local Development and Poverty Reduction” Programme

The LDPR Programme shall contribute to the general objectives of EEA Grants 2014-2021, respectively to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthening bilateral relations between Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and Beneficiary States. The LDPR Programme aims to strengthen social and economic cohesion, with the emphasis on strengthening support for equal opportunities for education of the primary school pupils and developing skills and competence transferable to the labour market, including measures in:

- natural sciences (chemistry, physics, nature and society, nature, biology, geography, technical culture) and mathematics
- information and communication technology in education
- entrepreneurship in skills development and increased job prospects
- active citizenship.

To create a solid foundation for social and economic growth, the LDPR Programme focuses on developing the capacities of the primary education system in Croatia in teaching skills transferable to the labour market, while encouraging excellence and creating an inclusive educational environment.

1.2. Management of the „Local Development and Poverty Reduction” Programme

LDPR Programme is managed by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds - Service for Management, Monitoring and Evaluation of EU Programmes and International Financial Mechanisms which performs role of the Programme Operator. All communication regarding the Programme shall be addressed to the Programme Operator. Information about the Programme can be found at the Programme’s official website <https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/>.



1.3. The Budget of the LDPR Programme

The total budget for the “Local Development and Poverty Reduction” Programme in Croatia is in the amount of **EUR 30.588.235,00** co-financing with 85% by EEA and Norway Grants, and the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia with 15%.



2. CALL FOR PROPOSALS „Strengthening STEM skills in primary schools and development of Regional Science Centres for STEM education in primary schools”

2.1. Focus of the Call

The Focus of this Call is to improve Croatian primary education capacity in STEM teaching and ultimately enhancing the STEM skills of teachers and other educational staff and pupils in primary schools.

STEM education, in terms of an integrated and applied approach to the teaching of pupils with a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, has the goal of preparing pupils for successful continuation of their secondary education, for their future successful careers and to meet the challenges of the complex and technologically advanced modern society.

To ensure the quality of STEM education in primary schools, primary schools will get the opportunity to ensure the infrastructure requirements and acquiring equipment needed for establishing modern STEM classrooms, simultaneously investing in their capacity buildings (developing skills of teachers) and designing and implementing new STEM activities for pupils relying on their enhanced capacities.

In order to make STEM education more interesting and accessible for primary school pupils, the Programme incites the establishment of Regional Science Centres for STEM education in primary schools. They represent an **informal model of cooperation** between primary schools, regional and local self-government units and other interested stakeholders (including the Republic of Croatia) who would establish their own premises (exceptionally in the premises owned by local and regional self-government units)) and conduct specialized activities for pupils at the local or regional level.) Centres would promote a new approach to science, technology, and entrepreneurship in a modern and innovative way. This type of centres would primarily have the role of promoting a new approach to science, technology and entrepreneurship in a modern and innovative way. The particular focus of such centres would be on (potentially) gifted pupils, early identification of their talent, and targeted and tailored skill development to fulfil their potential and ultimately achieve excellence at all levels of education.



In line with the focus and objectives of the Call and the provisions of the Programme Agreement, project proposals must be focused on the **STEM thematic area**, i.e., they should mainly contain activities for improving the STEM skills or teaching abilities in the STEM area for target groups referred to in point 2.1.3. of this Call. In line with the scope of STEM education and regarding existing curricula for primary schools, STEM area includes the subjects of natural, technical, and related sciences: biology, physics, geography, informatics, chemistry, mathematics, nature and nature and society; or any extra-curricular activities connected with natural, bio-technical and technical sciences. STEM education should put an emphasis on interdisciplinarity, implementation of knowledge from different themes and practical education.

In accordance with the focus and objectives of this Call and provisions of the Programme Agreement, in addition to STEM activities, the applicant may carry out activities in the following thematic areas:

- Information and communication technology (ICT) in education
- Entrepreneurship on skills development and increased job prospects
- Active citizenship

Information and communication technology (ICT) in education

The thematic area of information and communication technology (ICT) in education includes activities and programmes developing pupils' skills and improving the abilities of teachers and other educational workers in terms of functional use of ICT in the educational process. This refers to the use of ICT for education and research, to learn/educate responsible and critical use of ICT in the learning process, to create new ICT content, etc.

Entrepreneurship in skills development and increased job prospects

The thematic area of entrepreneurship in skills development and increased job prospects includes activities and programmes aimed at developing pupils' skills and improving the skills of teachers and other educational workers in teaching entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial competencies. This refers to the development of the individual's ability to turn ideas into action, which includes creativity, innovation, the ability to take reasonable risks as well as the ability to plan, organize and manage projects to achieve specific pre-defined goals.



Active citizenship

The thematic area of active citizenship includes activities and programmes aimed at developing pupils' skills and improving the ability of teachers and other educational workers in the field of active citizenship. This refers to the active encouragement of pupils participation in society, developing awareness and responsible behaviour in society and working for the common (social) good, encouraging solidarity behaviour, development of common spirit, social skills (in terms of adaptability and positive behaviour in society), learning of non-violent communication, raising awareness of the importance of volunteering, involving pupils in volunteer actions, participating in community service and developing of social solidarity.

Moreover, the Programme recognizes the importance of inclusive education, including pupils with special educational needs in project implementation. The selection of this area is related to the need for enhanced integration of pupils with special needs in the EU and the Republic of Croatia, which is not negligible at both levels. The constant development of activities tailored to the needs of such pupils is necessary to provide them with equal opportunities, improve their quality of life, and contribute to their successful future integration into the labour market. In addition to pupils with disabilities, focused and individualized work with gifted children will be encouraged, not only in terms of early identification and achieving full potential, but also investing in their development, adaptation and integration into a school system that recognizes their needs, although above all "tailored" to the needs of the average child/pupils.

In accordance with the objectives of the Program, the Call will encourage institutional cooperation between stakeholders in Donor States and in Croatia in the form of development of joint programs, exchange of experience, knowledge, good practices, skills and competencies and other cooperation activities, that will further contribute to development of capacities of institutions involved in primary education.

Finally, in line with the objectives of the Programme, special attention will be given to less developed areas¹ in the Republic of Croatia.

¹ The Decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the classification of local and regional self-government units according to the level of development is currently valid (Official Gazette No 132/17). The Decision in force on the day of publication of the Call will be used during selection process.



Horizontal principles of implementation

In accordance with Article 1.3. of the Regulation, the following horizontal principles have been established:

1. All programmes and activities funded by the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 shall be based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.
2. All programmes and activities funded by the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 shall follow the principles of good governance; they shall be participatory and inclusive, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, and efficient. There shall be zero-tolerance towards corruption.
3. All programmes and activities funded by the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 shall be consistent with sustainable development, long-term economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental protection.
4. All programmes and activities funded by the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 shall follow a results and risk management approach.

The grant award procedure under this Call will be guided by the above horizontal principles and their contribution will be further scored in the selection of project proposals.

2.1.1. Objectives of the Call

The general objective of the Call is to support the improvement of STEM skills of teachers, other educational workers, and primary school pupils.

Specific objectives of the Call

1. Improving the STEM skills of teachers and other educational workers and pupils in the primary education system.
2. Modernization of infrastructure and procurement of equipment for STEM activities.



2.1.2. Components of the Call

The Call shall be conducted through two components:

- A. Development of STEM skills through equipping school classrooms with STEM equipment**
- B. Establishment of Regional Science Centres for STEM education in primary schools**

The grant application should target only one component of the Call.

The establishment of a Regional Science Centre (hereafter referred to as “RSC”) for STEM education in primary schools **(under Component B of the Call) implies fulfilment of the following criteria:**

- a) involves the cooperation of at least one primary school and local and/or regional government unit (verified by the Partnership Declaration). Successful applicant shall be obliged to conclude a Partnership Agreement before signing the project contract
- b) carries out several activities/programmes dedicated to the development of STEM skills for pupils (verified by the grant application)
- c) is located on the premises of primary schools (within the school premises, in their respective dedicated facilities, or in any other primary school premises). In duly justified cases, where the schools involved do not possess the necessary infrastructural capacities, the Centre may be established on premises owned by the local/regional government unit, which is an applicant or partner on the project, and the premises are owned by the Republic of Croatia **for which the primary school or the local/regional government unit, which is an applicant or partner on the project, has the Contract of use or any other property/servitude/management right for the project durability period in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4.4. of the Call.** Applicant and/or partner must demonstrate ownership or other property rights for the respective premises
- d) foresees participation of more than one school, i.e., includes participants (target group members) from more schools, or at a wider level (on the territory of more than one local government unit, at the regional level, etc.)
- e) demonstrates Centre’s sustainability (financial and institutional) for at least five (5) years after the completion of the project (part of the investment study, in line with the provisions of paragraph 4.4. of this Call see the exemplar in Annex 5)



2.1.3. Target groups and final beneficiaries

Target groups of the Call:

- teachers and educational workers in institutions for primary education
- pupils enrolled in primary schools, including pupils with special educational needs
- experts working in public institutions responsible for implementing educational policies.

Inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is encouraged and shall result with additional points in the quality assessment. In accordance with Article 62 of the Education Act, pupils with special educational needs are:

- (potentially) gifted pupils
- pupils with difficulties (including pupils with disabilities; pupils with learning, behaviour and emotional difficulties; pupils with educational, social, economic, cultural, and/or linguistic disadvantages)

The applicant is obliged to ensure that the participants in the project activities are members of the target groups and must keep in mind that successful applicants (project promoters) will have to provide evidence and personal data for each participant when reporting on the implementation of project activities. If applicable, project promoters shall provide evidence of inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (i.e., statement of the primary school or equivalent proof documenting the particular type of special educational need of the pupil).

Target Groups and Final Beneficiaries of the Projects

Within the Application form, the Applicant defines the target groups of his projects (individuals and organisations participating in project activities), in order to demonstrate the relevance of the project. Target groups for individual participants are defined in the paragraph above, while the targeted organisations could be the applicant, partners and other organisations participating in project activities, i.e., local and regional government units (including less developed areas), primary schools, higher education institutions (i.e., universities, faculties, polytechnics, colleges), non-governmental organizations and foundations active in the field of education, and scientific institutions.



Alongside target groups, i.e., those who are directly affected by the project through the implementation of activities, it is important to define and quantify the final beneficiaries of the project **in order to demonstrate the long-term sustainability of the project and project results.** Examples of final beneficiaries are primary schools, local and regional self-government units, non-governmental organisations and foundations active in the field of education, educational workers in primary education institutions, pupils in primary education institutions, pupils with special educational needs, parents and the general public.

2.1.4. Expected Outcome and Outputs of the Call

In accordance with the Programme Agreement, project proposals (within both components) have to contribute to the achievement of outcome and outputs as follows:

Programme Objective: Strengthened social and economic cohesion

Outcome 2: Enhanced STEM skills

Outputs:

2.1. Classroom infrastructure and equipment for development of functional STEM classrooms upgraded

2.2. Regional Science Centres established

2.3. STEM skills of professionals in primary education upgraded

Bilateral output 1: Supported bilateral cooperation

The table below lists the performance indicators:

Outcome	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Source of verification	Target Value ²
2. Enhanced STEM skills	2.1. Share of professionals self-reporting on improved ability in STEM teaching	Baseline value: Number of survey participants	Results of the PP's survey	70 %

² Target value of indicators at the level of the Call and the Programme.



Projects funded in this Call must contribute to meet both outcome indicators.		Target value: Number of survey participants with a positive result		
	2.2. Share of pupils self-reporting on improved STEM skills	Baseline value: Number of survey participants	Results of the PP's survey	50 %
		Target value: Number of survey participants with a positive result		

Output	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Source of verification	Target Value ³
<i>2.1. Classroom infrastructure and equipment for development of functional STEM classrooms upgraded</i>	2.1.1. Number of schools introducing STEM classrooms	Number	Project records	Promoters' 10
	2.1.2. Number of schools with improved services (extracurricular activities and/or activities integrated with prolonged stay in school)	Number	Project records	Promoters' 10
Mandatory indicators for grant applications under Component A				
<i>2.2. Regional Science Centres developed</i>	2.2.1. Number of Regional Science Centres developed	Number	Project records	Promoters' 2
Mandatory indicator for grant applications under Component B				
<i>2.3. STEM skills of professionals in primary education upgraded</i>	2.3.1. Number of educational programmes (TOT) for STEM skills, ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship for professionals implemented	Number	Project records	Promoters' 4
	2.3.2. Number of educational programmes for STEM skills, ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship for pupils implemented	Number	Project records	Promoters' 4
	2.3.3. Number of staff participating in development and testing of teaching models,	Number	Project records Signature lists	Promoters' 300
All grant applications must contribute to at least one indicator of the Output 2.3.				

³ Target value of indicators at the level of the Call and the Programme.



practices and education activities for STEM-based skills, ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship				
2.3.4. Number of pupils enrolled in STEM programmes/courses	Number	Project records	Promoters' Signature lists	2,000
2.3.5. Number of pupils participating in extracurricular classes	Number	Project records	Promoters' Signature lists	200

Bilateral output	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Source of verification	Target Value ⁴
B.1 Bilateral output: Supported bilateral cooperation	Number of projects involving cooperation with a partner from the donor country	Number	Partnership Contract	15

A grant application must indicate and realistically quantify the contribution to the Call indicators in the Application form.

The grant application should target only one component of the Call. In line with the objective and in accordance with results outcomes, outputs and indicators of the Call, grant applications **should**:

- For grant applications under **Component A**, it is mandatory to contribute to both Outcome 2 indicators, both indicators of Output 2.1. and at least one indicator of the Output 2.3.
- For grant applications under **Component B**, it is mandatory to contribute to the achievement of both Outcome indicators, the indicator of the Output 2.2., and at least one indicator of the Output 2.3.

Contribution to the Bilateral Output indicator “Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner” is not mandatory. By contributing to the achievement of this indicator, the grant application can earn **additional points**.

⁴ Target value of indicators at the level of the Call and the Programme.



The project proposal targeting pupils with special educational needs can achieve contribution to the inclusive education to following sub-categories of indicators:

2.3.2. Number of implemented educational programmes for STEM skills, ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship for pupils with special educational needs

2.3.4. Number of pupils with special educational needs enrolled in STEM programmes/courses

2.3.5. Number of pupils with special educational needs participating in extracurricular classes

The contribution is not mandatory, but through contributing to the realization of these sub-categories of indicators, the project proposal can be awarded additional points.

The connection between the planned project results, and outcome and outputs of the Call and the contribution to the mandatory indicators is an integral part of the project eligibility check, while the contribution level is subject to project quality assessment, i.e., grant application selection criteria for funding, in accordance with Annexes 3-4.

The Programme Operator reserves the right to adjust the planned contribution when concluding the Project Contract following the conclusions of the grant award procedure.

The successful applicant (Project Promoter) is obliged to report on the contribution to the contracted indicators target values during project implementation and at the project completion and submit verification documents prescribed by the Project contract. This refers to the verification documents proposed by the applicant in the Application form and agreed upon with the Programme Operator in the contracting phase of the grant award procedure. This includes e.g., surveys, attendance sheets, time sheets, procurement contracts, certificate of occupancy for adapted STEM classrooms/RSC infrastructure, or any other suitable source of verification for the contribution to the relevant outcome/output indicator. If the indicator refers to project participants, the source of verification should include evidence that the participants are members of target groups (e.g., extracts from primary school records for pupils, employment contracts for teachers) and, if applicable, for certain sub-categories of Call indicators, additional evidence documenting the special educational needs of the pupil. Further elaboration of determining the contribution to indicators and evidence of achievement is stated in the Methodology for identifying project participants and monitoring indicators (which will be available to Project Promoters in Croatian)



The Project Promoter shall report on the achieved contribution to the indicator quarterly, through interim reports, and the final project report. In the event of not achieving the contracted indicator target value, the Programme Operator will conduct a financial correction/recovery according to the Project contract's relevant provisions.

2.2. Eligible Applicants and Partners

The eligible applicants are:

- primary schools established under the Education Act in the Republic of Croatia
- local and regional government units in the Republic of Croatia
- legal persons as founders or owners of primary schools in the Republic of Croatia.

The eligible partners are:

- Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations established as a legal person in Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, or Croatia.

The applicant and partners must be registered in the Republic of Croatia (or, in the case of a donor project partner, in one of the Donor States) for at least one year prior to the date of submission of the project proposal.

If the grant application includes a collaboration with one or more partners, the applicant is obliged to attach a signed Partnership Declaration to the grant application. The Partnership Declaration defines the roles and responsibilities of partners.

Additional criteria for eligibility of applicants and partners is listed in Paragraph 3.1. "Grant Award Procedure", Stage 2: Eligibility Check.



2.3. Number of Applications and Partnerships

Component A

A school can be subject to **only** one grant application (as applicant or partner) within Component A.

Primary school founders and local or regional self-government units can submit more than one grant application if proposed beneficiaries are different schools.

Project partnership is not mandatory, but partnership, especially with entities from Donor States, is highly encouraged and grants additional points.

A successful applicant (Project Promoter) shall sign a Partnership Agreement with all project partners prior to signing the Project Contract. A draft Partnership Agreement is available in Annex 1 of the Call. In the application process, applicant and partners are obliged to sign a Partnership Declaration as part of the grant application.

Component B

Each applicant can submit **only** one grant application.

An applicant can be a partner in another grant application.

The project partnership **is mandatory** and shall include at least one local or regional government unit and one primary school institution. Collaboration with entities from the Donor States is highly encouraged and grants additional points.

A successful applicant (Project Promoter) shall sign a Partnership Agreement with all project partners prior to signing the Project Contract. A draft partnership agreement is available in Annex 1 of the Call. In the application process, applicant and partners are obliged to sign a Partnership Declaration as part of the grant application.



Please note:

A school which is an applicant within Component A cannot be an applicant in component B. A school as a partner can participate in more than one project proposal within Component B.

2.4. Available amount for the Call

The total allocation for the Call is **EUR 22.270.362,00**.

The Call is co-financed 85% from the EEA Grants and 15% from the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia, as shown in the table below:

Total available amount (100%)	22.270.362,00 EUR
EEA Financial mechanism (85%)	18.929.808,00 EUR
State Budget of the Republic of Croatia (15%)	3.340.554,00 EUR

2.4.1. Project Financing and Duration

The project duration is from **12 to 21 months**.

The total available amount is divided between the two components into the indicative amounts:

Component		Available amount
A	Developing STEM skills through equipping school classrooms with STEM equipment	10.000.000 EUR
B	Establishing Regional Science Centres for STEM education in primary schools	12.270.362 EUR

The Programme Operator reserves the right to transfer unused funds to the component in which a greater number of project proposals have been submitted or funds for contracting are not sufficient.

The minimum and maximum amount of grant that can be awarded to an individual project is:



Component		Minimum	Maximum
A	Developing STEM skills through equipping school classrooms with STEM equipment	200.000 EUR	1.000.000 EUR
B	Establishing Regional Science Centres for STEM education in primary schools	1.000.000 EUR	3.000.000 EUR

This Call may cover up to **100% eligible costs** of the project.

When planning a grant application, all planned costs must be expressed in Croatian Kuna (HRK) in compliance with the conversion rate of the European Commission’s official monthly accounting rate for the euro (Infor euro) prevailing in the month of publication of the Call:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_en.

2.4.2. Cost Eligibility Period

The period of eligibility of costs begins with the adoption of the Funding Decision for the project and ends with the date defined in the Project Contract.

The final cost eligibility date is **30 April 2024**.

Costs incurred prior to the adoption of the Funding Decision are not eligible.

Applicants are strongly recommended to thoroughly verify if the project is realistic and feasible taking into consideration the final cost eligibility date in the Programme and project duration. The first and final dates of eligibility of each project will be stated in the Project Contract.

2.4.3. Grant Rates and Co-financing

The maximum grant rate is **100% of the eligible costs** of the project.

For projects and/or activities constituting *de minimis* aid, applicants and/or partners may be required to secure own co-financing of the project, determined on a case-by-case basis, in line with the provisions of the *De minimis* Scheme for the LDPR Programme. Also, project proposals



must be drafted in line with State Aid Rules. The total amount of *de minimis* aid that can be awarded to a single undertaking is EUR 200.000,00 over the period of three years.

If applicable, the applicant is obliged to provide funds to finance the total non-eligible costs within the grant application, which includes funds for potential non-eligible costs incurred during the project implementation.

Programme Operator shall ensure that payments to projects are made in a timely manner. Interim and final payments to the projects shall be based on approved project reports.

2.4.4. Currency

The currency used for filling out the application form, payments from the Programme Operator and settlements between Programme Operator and the Project Promoter is the Croatian kuna (HRK).

As stated earlier, when preparing a project proposal, all planned costs must be expressed in HRK, in relation to the monthly exchange rate list of the European Commission according to the InforEUR exchange rate in the month of publication of the Call:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en

The project contract shall state the maximum amount of the project grant in EUR.

2.5. Eligible Activities

The applicant may apply for funding to cover expenses of the following types of activities, depending on the project component under which the grant application is submitted:

1. **Capacity-building activities for teachers and other educational workers in the STEM field - mandatory under both components**

Examples of such activities are:



- education of teachers and other educational workers in primary schools in the field of STEM / or STEM teaching methods, including special programmes for working with pupils with special educational needs
- ToT - training of trainers - application of formal and informal programs and/or modules of education of future trainers (teachers and other educational workers in primary schools in the field of STEM, including special programmes for working with pupils with special educational needs
- organizing and conducting of summer schools in the field of STEM for in-service teachers and pre-service teachers and other educational staff in primary schools
- development of programs that include the development of teaching skills of novice teachers in STEM-related topics
- participating and organizing seminars (workshops), lectures (live, online webinars, e-courses, learning platforms) on STEM education
- participation in thematic conferences, fairs on STEM education
- organisation of study visits in Croatia and in Donor States (exchange of experience, examples of good practice, learn/job shadowing)
- mentoring of partner institutions from Croatia and Donor States on STEM education
- exchange of experiences of teachers and other educational workers in primary schools, relevant stakeholders in Croatia and an in Donor States

2. Development/enhancement of pupils' STEM skills in primary schools - mandatory under both components

Examples of such activities are:

- application of educational programs in the field of STEM for pupils within elective and optional subjects, extracurricular activities, elective part of interdisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary topics and/or modules and other educational activities, programmes and projects
- organisation and conducting of pupils' experience exchange between schools in the Republic of Croatia and Donor States
- design and organisation of field study visits for pupils in the STEM
- design of various workshops for pupils in the STEM (one-day, multi-day)
- preparation of innovative and/or interactive contents for pupils in primary schools on the topic of popularization of STEM
- digitalization of educational content in STEM subjects



- organisation of specialized STEM education activities for pupils with special educational needs

3. Establishment of Regional Science Centres for Primary Education in the STEM area - mandatory under the Component B

Examples of such activities are:

- defining and developing the framework of the activities in the Centre
- preparation of documents crucial for the organisation and development of the Centre, e.g. multi-annual strategic development plan of the Centre, annual work plans
- establishment of spatial capacities of the Regional Research Centres for Primary Education in the STEM area
- professional training of teachers and other educational workers and other employees of primary schools in the field of management and administration of the Centre
- cooperation and exchange of experience with other educational Centres in the Republic of Croatia, outside the Republic of Croatia and Donor States, as well as international centres operating in the field of primary education
- drafting and implementation of agreements on cooperation and cooperation with local primary and secondary schools and drafting agreements on the future use of the established Centre with other units of local and regional self-government
- development of a framework for cooperation and establishment of cooperation with primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions or scientific organisations in the implementation of project activities (depending on which activities are proposed in the project) and in the field of research and development/introduction of innovations
- preparation, development and implementation of quality assurance mechanisms for the development and work of the Centre (implementation of evaluation and self-evaluation procedures) as well as development and implementation of other quality assurance tools including monitoring of pupils upon completion of primary education and monitoring the success of other participants
- organization of campaigns for the promotion of the Centre
- organization of workshops for parents and primary school pupils in order to inform about the opportunities provided by the Centre and the implementation of professional guidance for primary school pupils
- organization of specialized fairs with the aim to present companies to the attendants of Centres



- preparation of pupils for participation in skills competitions (at the national / international level) and for participation in events and organization of competitions within the Centres (school and inter-county competitions).

4. Modernization of space and procurement of STEM equipment for schools - eligible under the Component A

Applicants must demonstrate a connection with the activities listed under points 1 and 2.

Examples of such activities are:

- renovation / adaptation / reconstruction of schools (classrooms) for STEM learning (e.g., minor repairs, alterations and works, adaptation of the premises that will serve as STEM classrooms within schools in order to achieve applicable safety standards, interior design)
- procurement of STEM equipment and classroom equipment, purchase of didactic tools and other equipment that contributes to the application of STEM (e.g., ICT equipment such as computers, laptops, tablets and smart boards, projectors, audio-visual equipment, mechanisms, machines for practical learning, software, licences etc.)
- procurement of additional equipment such as "smart" toys and other teaching and didactic materials (audio-visual and interactive materials, teaching aids, manuals, textbooks and literature in digital or paper form) that can contribute to the development of motor skills and skills of pupils, and related to STEM areas (e.g., didactic equipment used for practical workshops that use and develop engineering or mathematical skills, etc.)
- renovation / adaptation / reconstruction / equipping of additional school infrastructure that contributes to the application of STEM (e.g., establishment of STEM parks and STEM gardens)

5. Renovation / adaptation / reconstruction and equipping of the premises of the Regional Science Centres for Primary Education in the STEM area - eligible under the Component B

Applicants must demonstrate a connection with the activities listed under points 1, 2 and 3.

Examples of such activities are:

- renovation / adaptation / reconstruction of the premises to be used as Centres (e.g. minor repairs, alterations and works, adaptation in order to achieve applicable safety standards, interior design)



Building a completely new facility / annex (greenfield investment) is not an acceptable activity.

All investments (renovation / adaptation / reconstruction / equipping) must be carried out on the premises of existing school buildings or, in justified cases, premises owned by local or regional government units or the local/regional government unit, which is an applicant or partner on the project and/or the premises owned by the Republic of Croatia for which the primary school or the local/regional government unit which is an applicant or partner on the project has a use contract, or any other property/servitude/management right for the project durability period in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4.4. of the Call.

- equipping STEM Learning Centres (e.g., interior design, furniture procurement, procurement of wireless network equipment packages, procurement of ICT and AV equipment)
- procurement of specialized equipment for STEM content for the Centre (procurement of ICT equipment, mechanisms and machines for practical learning, "smart" toys and other equipment for pupils that will be used for STEM content)
- procurement of teaching and didactic audio-visual and interactive materials, teaching aids, manuals, textbooks and literature in digital or paper form that can contribute to the development of motor skills and skills of pupils and related to STEM areas
- purchase of real estate or land for the purposes of project implementation and ensuring project sustainability in line with the point 4.4. of this Call
- renovation / adaptation / reconstruction / equipping of additional school infrastructure that contributes to the application of STEM (e.g., establishment of STEM parks and STEM gardens).

6. Training activities for teachers and other educational staff of the primary schools in ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship - eligible under both components

Examples of such activities are:

- education of teachers and other educational workers in primary schools in eligible thematic areas as defined in point 2.1 of the Call, including special programmes for working with pupils with special educational needs
- ToT - training of trainers - application of formal and informal programs and/or modules of education of future trainers (teachers and other educational workers in primary schools)



in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship teaching, including special programmes for working with pupils with special educational needs

- organizing summer schools for teachers and other educational staff in primary schools, in-service teachers, and pre-service teachers in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship teaching
- development of programs that include the development of teaching skills of novice teachers in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship
- participating and organizing seminars (workshops), lectures (live, online webinars, e-courses, learning platforms) within thematic areas as defined in paragraph 2.1 of the Call
- participation in thematic conferences, fairs on ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship teaching:
- organisation and conducting of study visits in Croatia and in donor states (exchange of experience, examples of good practice, learn/job shadowing)
- mentoring of partner institutions from Croatia and donor states on ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship teaching
- exchange of experiences of teachers and other educational workers in primary schools, inside Republic of Croatia and in Donor States
- application of information, communication, and all other forms of (new) technologies in education

7. Development of learning models, practical work in teaching and other educational activities in STEM, ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship - eligible under both components

Examples of such activities are:

- development of models, methods and/or teaching strategies (learning, concrete application in teaching) for teachers and other educational workers and other employees of primary schools during the service (in-service teacher) and professional trainee associates (pre-service teachers) in STEM, ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship education
- development of up to 15% of the content of school curriculum in the fields of STEM and within other thematic areas as defined in paragraph 2.1. of the Call that schools independently propose in accordance with legal regulations in the Republic of Croatia
- change and/or amendment of up to 20% of approved study programs (curricula) of polytechnics and colleges in the fields of STEM, ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship, which higher education institutions independently propose in compliance



with legal provisions support to the development and transfer of innovative practices through peer learning and the exchange of good practice in the field of teaching methodologies between schools and the donor partners

- support for the development and transfer of innovative practices through peer learning and exchange of good practices in the field of teaching methodologies between schools and the donor partner
- exchange of experiences of teachers and other educational workers of primary schools, inside the Republic of Croatia and in Donor States
- development and/or procurement of teaching and didactic, audio-visual, and interactive materials, teaching aids, manuals and textbooks in digital format
- research on the impact of new technologies on the success and competencies of primary school pupils
- developing models of application of STEM, ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship in new circumstances - global pandemic COVID 19

8. Development and implementation of education programmes and extracurricular activities for primary school pupils in ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship - eligible under both components

Examples of such activities are:

- application of educational programs in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship within elective and optional subjects, extracurricular activities, elective part of interdisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary topics and/or modules and other educational activities, programs, and projects
- organisation of exchange of pupils' experiences between schools in the Republic of Croatia and in Donor States
- design and organisation of field study visits for pupils in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship
- design of various workshops for pupils in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship (one-day, multi-day)
- preparation of innovative and/or interactive contents for pupils in primary schools in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship
- organisation of specialised activities in the fields of ICT, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship education activities for pupils with special educational needs



9. Project management and administration – mandatory (implementation of management and administrative obligations in line with the provisions of Project Contact)

Examples of such activities are:

- implementing management, coordination, reporting and monitoring project activities (in-house or procured services)
- carrying out public procurement activities in line with the procurement plan.

10. Information and visibility activities – mandatory (implementation of information and communication activities in line with Article 1.7 Regulation and with the provisions of communication plan)

Examples of such activities are:

- organising events at the local level in order to raise awareness of the importance of STEM, ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship
- production of project promotional materials (brochures, leaflets, manuals, etc.)
- dissemination of information about the project through other media channels (press, radio, television, website development, advertising on social networks, etc.)
- organisation of information events.

Activities must be implemented within priority thematic areas as defined in paragraph 2.1. of the Call.

The list (examples) of activities is not exhaustive. Other activities contributing to the objective, outcomes, outputs and indicators of the Call shall be taken into account in the eligibility check unless explicitly stated as non-eligible.

2.5.1. Non-eligible Activities

The following types of activities are non-eligible for funding:

- construction of entirely new facilities/annexes (greenfield investment)
- infrastructure investment (renovation/adaptation/reconstruction/refurbishment) not carried out within existing school facilities, or, in justified cases, premises owned by local or regional government units, **which is an applicant or partner on the project**, and the premises owned by the Republic of Croatia for which the primary school **or the local/regional government unit** has a use contract, or any other



property/servitude/management right for the project durability period in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4.4. of the Call.

- activities related exclusively to the purchase of real estate and/or land
- activities related to the development of school curricula in the field of STEM, ICT, entrepreneurship and active citizenship more than 15% of the content that schools independently propose in accordance with legal regulations
- activities related to amendments and/or supplementation to approved study programmes of polytechnics and higher education institutions more than 20% which higher education institutions independently propose in accordance with legal regulations
- activities relating exclusively to physical establishment of the Centre and/or classroom equipment
- activities related exclusively to the financing of participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses
- activities solely related to individual educational workshops
- activities that generate income or profit from target groups and final beneficiaries, **except the *de minimis* aid awarded in accordance with Annex 6**
- which do not comply with the listed eligible activities.

2.6. Costs

Eligible costs of projects are those actually incurred by the Project Promoter and Project Partner(s), which meet the following criteria:

- they incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract
- they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the project
- they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project
- they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected outcomes in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner and determined according to the applicable accounting standards in the Republic of Croatia, or the resident county of the Project Partner, and according to generally accepted accounting principles
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation



- they comply with the requirements of the applicable public-procurement act, as described in article 8.15 of the Regulation and the requirements concerning public procurement
- they are consistent with the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities and the principle of equality between women and men.

Costs are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works).

Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the expenses are paid within 30 days of the final date for eligibility. Overheads and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when recorded on the Project Promoter accounts.

Costs incurred after 30 April 2024 shall not be eligible.

The Project Promoter's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared regarding the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

2.6.1. Eligible Costs

Within this Call, eligible costs are direct and indirect costs. **Direct costs** are costs that the successful applicant/project partner, in accordance with its accounting principles and usual internal regulations, has determined as costs directly related to the implementation of the project/activity, which can therefore be directly recorded as project costs. **Indirect costs** are eligible costs that the Project Promoter and/or project partner as being directly attributed to the project, but which can be identified and justified within its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs. Indirect project costs represent a fair distribution of the overall overheads of the Project Promoter or the project partner.

Direct costs incurred in the frame of the project fall into one of the following categories:



1. costs of the purchase of real estate and/or land for project implementation and subsequent sustainability of the project

Costs of the purchase of the real estate or land may amount up to 10% of the total eligible costs of the project.

2. costs of works on renovation/adaptation/reconstruction, refurbishment and interior design of the school premises or the premises of the RSC
3. cost of new or second-hand equipment

The costs of purchasing land or real estate referred to in point 1, works referred to in point 2 and equipment referred to in point 3 shall be eligible only if they are clearly related, justified and necessary for the implementation of project activities. Such costs may cumulatively amount to a maximum of 60% of the total eligible project costs.

4. the cost of staff assigned to the project, comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this corresponds to the Project Promoter's and Project Partner's usual policy on remuneration
5. travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the Project Promoter's and Project Partner's usual practices on travel costs
6. costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project
7. costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement
8. costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the **project contract**

Indirect costs shall be calculated by the Project Promotor and Project Partners as a flat rate of **up to 15% of the direct eligible costs of the staff** without there being a requirement for the Programme Operator to perform a calculation to determine the applicable rate.

The method of calculating indirect costs and their maximum amount must be specified in the Project Contract. The method of distributing the indirect costs between project partners must be prescribed in the Partnership Agreement between the Project Promoter and the project partner.



2.6.2. Non-eligible Costs

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges
- charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts and financial services imposed by the Project Contract
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities
- exchange losses
- recoverable VAT
- costs that are covered by other sources (double funding)
- 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.

2.7. Location of the Project

The selected projects shall be implemented in Republic of Croatia.

Activities including bilateral cooperation can be implemented on the territory of Donor States.

2.8. Submission and Withdrawal of Grant Application

Grant applications must be submitted to Programme Operator exclusively via email: ldpr@mrrfeu.hr in **Croatian language**⁵ containing the Application Form and its annexes, which can be downloaded on the Programme web page:

<https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/>.

Grant application consists of the following documents:

⁵ The summary and description of the project within the Application Form is prepared in Croatian and English. An Applicant/Partner statement is prepared in English for the partners from Donor States. Partnership Declaration shall be submitted in English in case when project proposal provides partnership with partners from Donor States.



DOCUMENT	COMPULSORY (YES/if applicable)	EXPLANATION
Application form	Yes	The Application form must be completed in an appropriate format (Form 1).
Applicant/Partner Statement	Yes	The statement shall be completed in the appropriate format (Form 2). A separate declaration must be submitted for the applicant and each partner. The Statement must be signed by the authorised person and stamped with the organisation's official stamp.
Communication Plan	Yes	The communication plan must contain mandatory activities in accordance with the paragraph 4.3. "Information and Communication".
Partnership Declaration	If applicable	The declaration shall be submitted where the project includes the participation of one or more partners in the project activities. The declaration must be completed in an appropriate format (Form 3). The Declaration must be signed by the authorised person of each partner organisation and stamped with the organisations' official stamp.
De minimis Declaration	If applicable	The declaration must be completed in the appropriate format. A separate declaration must be submitted for the applicant and for each partner, who is the beneficiary of the <i>de minimis</i> aid.
Investment study	If applicable	A study shall be required for grant applications under Component B, in line with the provisions of Paragraph 4.4. of this Call. An exemplar of the study is available in Annex 5 of this Call.
Proof that the applicant is eligible legal entity	If applicable	If the relevant electronic database does not contain updated data on the applicant/ partner, it is necessary to submit an official document (request for entry in the register, statute or other basic act, etc.) as part of the grant application, which shows that there is a change in relation to the stated in the register and proving the eligibility of the applicant/ partner to participate in this Call.
Proof of ownership/property right	If applicable	For grant applications under Component B, if the grant application includes investments in infrastructure, and if the ownership (or another basis of property right), is not visible from the Joint Information System of Land Registers and Cadastre, the applicant shall provide adequate proof.



Proposals must be submitted **no later than 16:00 (CET) on the day of relevant submission deadline**. The time of application is the time and date of sending the e-mail by which the project proposal is submitted to the e-mail address: ldpr@mrrfeu.hr. Only the duly authorized representative of the Applicant is authorized to submit a grant application.

The deadline for submission of grant application for Component A shall be **ninety (90) days** from the day of the announcement of the Call and the deadline for submission of grant application for Component B shall be **hundred and twenty (120) days** from the day of the announcement of the Call.

The Call will be published on the website: <https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/>

Grant applications submitted outside the deadline shall automatically be excluded from the further procedure.

The Programme Operator shall confirm each submitted grant application with an e-mail reply. Only grant application submitted by the deadline and in accordance with the requirements specified in the Call will be accepted.

The applicant shall inform the Programme Operator about any involvement of consultants in the process of preparing the application. The identity and the role of the consultant(s) shall be disclosed in the Application Form.

Please note: Versions of proposals sent on paper, removable electronic storage medium (e.g. CD-ROM, portable drive etc.) or by fax shall not be regarded as having been received by the Programme Operator. If more than one copy of the same proposal is received, only the first version is evaluated. A grant application may be withdrawn at any stage of the award procedure, that is until the moment of signing of the Project Contract. To withdraw a proposal, an applicant submits a written statement, signed by Project Promoter's legal representative to the Programme Operator to ldpr@mrrfeu.hr.

The statement must clearly indicate the proposal in question and Project Promoter's intent to withdraw it. Date of delivery of the abovementioned statement to the Programme Operator will be regarded as date of proposal withdrawal.



3. THE GRANT AWARD PROCEDURE

In accordance with Article 7.4 (1) of the Regulation, the award procedure will be carried out by the Programme Operator, guided by the principles of good governance, transparency, equality of treatment, efficiency, and a zero-tolerance rate for corruption.

A Grant Application shall be assessed based on a set of eligibility and selection criteria. The said criteria are based on the objectives and the outcome that the Call and Programme seeks to achieve.

3.1. Grant Award Procedure

The grant award procedure shall be carried out through the following stages:

1. Formal/Administrative check
2. Eligibility check
 - 2.1. Eligibility of Applicant/Partner
 - 2.2. Eligibility of Project
 - 2.3. Eligibility of Project Activities
3. Quality Assessment
4. Budget clearing of grant applications
5. Adoption of the Funding Decision

The next stage of the award procedure for each individual grant application can start while the previous stage is still ongoing, however, it cannot be completed before the completion of all preceding stages. Also, a grant application that has not successfully passed one stage of the award procedure cannot be referred to further stages of the award procedure, or further stages of the award procedure are suspended if they have previously started.

The award procedure lasts a **maximum of one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days**, counting from the first day following the deadline for submission of grant application to the date of the Funding Decision.



During each stage of the award procedure, the Programme Operator may request additional information from the applicant in accordance with paragraph 3.1.1. "Delivery of additional information".

Upon completion of each stage of the award procedure, the Programme Operator shall inform the Applicant of each submitted project proposal of the outcome. The Applicant may request clarifications related to the implementation of award procedure via e-mail: ldpr@mrrfeu.hr.

If an Applicant deems that it has been damaged in a particular stage of the award procedure, it shall have eight (8) working days on its disposal, following the receipt of the notification on the status of the Grant Application, to file a complaint in accordance with point 3.1.2. "Complaints".

Stage 1: Formal/Administrative Check

No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria	If "NO"	
1.	The grant application was submitted in the prescribed manner (ldpr@mrrfeu.hr) and is in line with the provisions on number of applications per applicant/partner.	NO	YES	NO	REJECTION
2.	A grant application was submitted within the prescribed deadline: Component A: 28.7.2021 till 16:00 CET Component B: 27.8.2021 till 16:00 CET	NO	YES	NO	REJECTION
3.	The grant application is filled in the correct template (Form 1).	NO	YES	NO	REJECTION
4.	The grant application contains all mandatory annexes, in line with paragraph 2.8.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
5.	Where applicable, the Annexes are filled in using the correct templates, in accordance with paragraph 2.8.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
6.	Where applicable, the documents were signed by the authorised person and stamped with the organisation's official stamp.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION



No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria		If "NO"
7.	The application is written in Croatian, or in English in the relevant sections of the Application Form.	NO	YES	NO	REJECTION
8.	If applicable, a Partnership Declaration was submitted and included all envisaged project partners.	NO	YES	NO	REJECTION

Stage 2: Eligibility Check

Stage 2.1 Eligibility of Applicant/Partner

Verification of the applicant's and partner's eligibility will include the assessment of the following elements:

No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria		If "NO"
1.	The applicant/partner is eligible in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2.2.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
2.	The applicant/partner is registered to perform activities in the Republic of Croatia (or, in the case of a partner, in the territory of one of the Donor States, if applicable) for at least one year until the date of submission of the grant application.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
3.	The applicant/partner has the legal, financial and operational capacity to implement the activities to the extent described in the grant application.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
4.	The applicant/partner has paid all taxes and other mandatory obligations in accordance with national legislation due for payment up to and including the last	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION



No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria		If "NO"
	day of the month before the Application for the Call. ⁶				
5.	The applicant/partner is not in the process of termination of work, in the procedure of pre-bankruptcy settlement, bankruptcy procedure, procedure of forced collection or in the procedure of liquidation.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
6.	The applicant/partner or a person authorized by law to represent it has not been convicted of criminal offences related to business and professional conduct (e.g. fraud, bribery, tax evasion, abuse of position and authority, illegal favouritism, an association for the commission of criminal offences).	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
7.	The applicant/partner, or a person authorized by law to represent him, is not in a conflict of interest in the award procedure in question.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
8.	The applicant/partner is not guilty of providing false information or of violating the provisions on the intended use of funds and other provisions of the contract concluded for the purpose of awarding grants from public sources.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
9.	The applicant / partner is not subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous European Commission decision declaring the aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
10.	The applicant / partner is not in the process of recovering State aid or de minimis aid granted by the EU Member State	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION

The Programme Operator will verify the compliance of the applicant and each partner with the eligibility criteria no. 1 and 2 within the award procedure by inspecting publicly available electronic databases, depending on the legal personality of the applicant/partner, e.g.:

⁶ By way of derogation, it is considered acceptable that the applicant / partner has not complied with the said obligations, if, in accordance with a special regulation, he has not been allowed to pay these obligations or has been granted a deferral of payment.



- Register of primary school institutions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science and Education
- List of counties, cities and municipalities kept by the Ministry of Justice and Administration
- Register of higher education institutions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science and Education
- Register of scientific organisations under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science and Education
- Court Register of the Ministry of Justice and Administration
- Register of Associations of the Ministry of Justice and Administration
- Register of Foundations of the Ministry of Justice and Administration etc.

If the relevant electronic database does not contain updated data on the applicant / partner, it is necessary to submit an official document (request for entry in the register, statute, or other basic act, etc.) as part of the grant application, which shows that there is a change in relation to the stated in the register and proving the eligibility of the applicant / partner to participate in this Call.

Fulfilment of eligibility criteria 3-10 the applicant/partner proves with a signed Applicant/Partner Statement which is Form 2 of this Call. The Programme Operator reserves the right to verify compliance with these requirements by consulting other publicly available information, as well as seeking additional clarification from the applicant/partner.

Stage 2.2. Eligibility of the Project

All project activities should comply with all eligibility provisions set out in this Call and its annexes. Moreover, the grant application must comply with all applicable national and EU regulations.

Applicants may not apply for the funding of project activities for the implementation for which they have already received full funding from other public sources of funding as such activities would be considered non-eligible. This especially refers to projects co-financed from ESI funds in the Republic of Croatia in the field of elementary education capacity building. Alongside ESI funds, double funding is not permissible from any other public source such as local and regional budgets, international funding sources, or private donations. However, the complementary implementation and co-funding with other public financing sources such as state budget, local



and/or regional budget, EU funds, or any other financial mechanisms is allowed and encouraged, whereas double funding of the same activities for the same end users must be avoided.

Applicants and (if applicable) Partners guarantee the compliance of the grant application with all applicable legislative and regulatory frameworks and the absence of double funding by signing the Applicant/Partner Statement (Form 2). The Programme Operator reserves the right to verify compliance with these requirements by inspecting other publicly available information as well as seeking additional clarifications during the award process.

No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria	No	
1.	The grant application is aimed at one component of the Call.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
2.	The project is implemented within the eligible geographical area in accordance with paragraph 2.7. "Location of the Project".	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
3.	The duration of the project is in line with paragraph 2.4.1. "Project financing and duration".	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
4.	The requested grant amount meets the thresholds set out in paragraph 2.4.1. "Project financing and duration".	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
5.	The project activities will not be double funded.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
6.	The project complies with applicable national and EU regulations.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
7.	The project complies with the state aid rules.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
8.	The project contributes to the mandatory indicators set out in paragraph 2.1.4. "Expected Outcomes and Outputs of the Call".	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
9.	The communication plan contains all mandatory activities in accordance with paragraph 4.3. "Information and Communication.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
10.	Where applicable, the RSC meets the minimum conditions set out in paragraph 2.1.2.	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION

Project proposals that meet all verification criteria move to the next stage of the award procedure. Failure to meet one of the above verification criteria will result in the exclusion of the project proposal from the award procedure. If the Programme Operator determines that a particular project proposal does not meet a particular verification criterion, the Programme Operator shall determine that the project proposal is ineligible for funding and terminate the award procedure for the project proposal (including the current stage of grant award procedure).

After the completion of each stage of grant award procedure, each applicant shall receive a notification on the status of their project proposal electronically (by e-mail). Applicants who do not meet the verification criteria are entitled to submit a complaint in accordance with paragraph 3.1.2. "Complaints". Receipt of a complaint for an individual grant application does not delay the start of the next phase of the award procedure for other grant applications.

Stage 2.3.: Eligibility of Project Activities

Eligibility check of project activities involves the verification of the compliance of the proposed project activities with the provisions on eligible activities, thematic areas, and target groups. It is carried out by the Programme Operator on the basis on the recommendations of the independent external evaluators.

The eligibility check of project activities is conducted in line with the following verification criteria:

No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria		If No
1.	The grant application is aligned with the objectives and purpose of the Call	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
2.	Project activities are carried out within one or more priority thematic areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM education • information and communication technology (ICT) in education • entrepreneurship on skills development and increased job prospects • active citizenship 	YES	YES	NO	Exclusion of certain project activities



No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria		If No
3.	Project activities are eligible in accordance with the paragraph 2.5. "Eligible Activities"	YES	YES	NO	Exclusion of certain project activities
4.	Project activities are intended for eligible target groups from paragraph 2.1.3. "Target Groups and Final Beneficiaries"	YES	YES	NO	Exclusion of certain project activities
5.	If applicable, following the exclusion of activities ineligible for funding from the project proposal, there is no risk that the project results or mandatory Call indicators in line with paragraph 2.1.4. shall not be realized	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
6.	If applicable, following the exclusion of activities non-eligible for funding from the project proposal, the amount of the grant requested meets the thresholds set out in paragraph 2.4.1. "Project financing and duration"	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION

Eligibility assessment of project activities is based on the verification criteria set out in Project Activities Eligibility Verification Form (Annex 2 to this Call). The eligibility check of project activities is preliminary performed by 2 evaluators for each grant application. Each evaluator separately reviews the grant application by filling in the Project Activities Eligibility Check Form. Based on the conclusions of their eligibility check, the evaluators may propose to the Programme Operator to exclude certain activities from the project proposal implementation plan and budget as non-eligible and/or to exclude the entire grant application from the grant award procedure. The final decision on the eligibility of project activities shall be made by the Programme Operator, upon the recommendations of the independent external evaluators.

Stage 3: Quality Assessment

In the quality assessment stage, grant applications are evaluated in accordance with the selection criteria as defined in this Call. The quality assessment is coordinated by the Programme Operator, and it is carried out by independent evaluators and the Evaluation Committee.



The Evaluation Committee is formed by the Programme Operator. The Committee will consist of an odd number, at least 3 voting members, a representative of the Programme Operator, a representative of the Donor Program Partner and a representative of the sectoral competent authority or another body independent from the Programme Operator. The Committee shall appoint a Chairperson and a Secretary, representatives of the Programme Operator, without voting rights. Members of Donor States, the National Focal Point and the Financial Mechanism Office will be invited to participate in the work of the Committee as observers. The Committee shall also appoint substitute members who will participate if a permanent member is unable to attend the Committee meeting.

Each project proposal will be evaluated by at least two independent evaluators, each of whom will complete a Quality Assessment Form based on the following criteria:

1. Relevance of the project to expected Outcomes and Outputs of the Call – **10 points**
2. Contribution to the Call indicators – **10 points**
3. Contribution to inclusive education – **10 points**
4. Capacities of applicant and/or partners (if applicable) for project implementation – **10 points**
5. Project sustainability – **20 points**
6. Design and preparedness of the project – **25 points (for Component A) / 20 points (for Component B)**
7. Scope and strength of the partnership (only for Component B) – **10 points**
8. Project scope (only for Component B) – **10 points**
9. Project budget quality – **10 points**
10. Bilateral partnership – **10 points**
11. Contribution to balanced regional development – **15 points**
12. Contribution to horizontal principles from paragraph 2.1. of the Call – **5 points**

The maximum points that a grant application can receive based on the above criteria are:

- Under Component A - **125 points**
- Under Component B - **140 points**

Grant applications that do not meet the point threshold in the quality assessment process **will not be considered for funding** and will be excluded from the further award procedure.



The minimum threshold scores are as follows:

- Under Component A - **75 points**
- Under Component B - **80 points**

Selection criteria are elaborated in more detail in the Quality Assessment Form (Annex 3 and 4 of this Call).

After the conclusion of the quality assessment of all eligible grant applications, the Programme Operator shall prepare a ranking list of grant applications ranking above the threshold for funding. The ranking of an individual grant application is calculated as the average of the scores of the two evaluators appointed to the grant application. If the difference between the scores given by the two experts is higher than 30% of the higher score given by one evaluator, the Programme Operator shall assign a third evaluator to the grant application. In such cases, the average score of the two closest scores shall be used for ranking the project.

In case two or more different grant applications achieve the same number of points, the priority in financing will be realized by those grant applications that achieve a higher cumulative number of points in Criteria 5 and 6.

The ranking list will also include a reserve list of grant applications that will be considered for funding in case of availability of additional funding after budget clearing for selected projects from the ranking list. The reserve list will include grant applications scoring over the defined thresholds, but not covered by the available funds for the Call.

The Programme Operator shall present the ranking list to the Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee shall review the ranking list and decide on its adoption. In justified cases, the Committee may propose a change in the ranking, in accordance with transparent criteria and the Committee's rules of procedure. The minutes of the meetings of the Committee must include a record of such a proposal. The Committee decides on the adoption of the ranking list by consensus of all voting members. In case of impossibility to reach a consensus, the decision can be made by a majority vote. Any dissenting opinion must be included in the Minutes of the Committee meetings.

The Programme Operator shall monitor the compliance of the recommendations of the Committee with the provisions of the Call and the legal and legislative framework applicable to



the Call and the Programme. If it does not identify any irregularities, the Programme Operator will issue a final ranking list of grant applications.

Stage 4: Budget Clearing of Grant Application

The Programme Operator shall perform budget clearing (verification of eligibility of costs) for grant applications covered by the available funds under the Call, based on the following verification criteria:

No	Verification criteria	Possibility to request clarification (Yes/No)	Meeting the criteria		If No
1.	The project costs are in line with the provision on eligible costs in accordance with Paragraph 2.6. "Costs"	YES	YES	NO	Budget correction
2.	The cost presented in the project budget are realistic and based on market prices	YES	YES	NO	Budget correction
3.	The indirect costs are calculated by flat rate amounting up to 15% of the eligible (direct) staff costs	YES	YES	NO	Budget correction
4.	If applicable, following verification of the eligibility of costs or excluding, where appropriate, the non-eligible costs, the requested grant amount complies with the thresholds set out in Paragraph 2.4.1. "Project Financing and Duration"	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION
5.	If applicable, after verification of the eligibility of costs or, where appropriate, exclusion of non-eligible costs, there is no risk that the project results or mandatory indicators from paragraph 2.1.4. of the Call shall not be realized	YES	YES	NO	REJECTION



When verifying the eligibility of the costs estimated in the grant application, the Programme Operator takes into account the conclusions of the previous phase of the award procedure (quality assessment of the grant application). The Programme Operator, in cooperation with the applicant, amends the budget of the grant application by excluding non-eligible and adjusting excessive cost only to the extent that it does not affect the results of previous award phases, does not change the concept of the eligible project or activities, and does not affect the objectives of the proposed grant application. If the same is not possible, the grant application will be considered non-eligible for funding.

In the event of additional funds made available within the Call, the Programme Operator shall perform budget clearing for the next grant application from the reserve list, until the total budget is allocated.

As part of the Budget clearing phase, and before drafting a Funding Decision, the Programme Operator will require each applicant to submit **a certificate from the Tax Administration on the absence of the public debt for the applicant and partner organisations.**

3.1.1. Delivery of Additional Information

In case the data submitted in the grant application is not clear or contain errors and in cases when for the stated reasons he is not able to objectively carry out the award procedure, the Programme Operator may request additional information from the applicant at any stage during the award procedure. Applicants are obliged to act in accordance with the request of the Programme Operator within the specified period (5) working days, otherwise their grant application is excluded from the award procedure. Communication between the Programme Operator and the applicant is done electronically (by e-mail).

The content of the Grant Application cannot be modified by the additional information.

3.1.2. Complaints

Applicants who consider that they have been harmed by improper treatment during the award procedure shall have the right to file a complaint within eight (8) working days, from the date of



receipt of the notification on the status of the Grant Application after the end of each stage of the award procedure.

The complaint, in order to be decided upon, must be comprehensible and contain at least:

- data on the applicant (name, address, OIB – personal identification number)
- Call name
- reasons for complaint
- signature of the applicant or the authorized person of the applicant
- if applicable, a power of attorney to lodge a complaint
- applicant's stamp
- documentation proving the allegations set out in the complaint.

The burden of proving these facts is on the applicant.

Complaints are submitted electronically (scan of the signed document) to the e-mail address: prigovori.nft@mrrfeu.hr

Complaints that do not contain the minimum information listed above shall not be taken into consideration.

A Complaint Committee consisting of representatives of the National Focal Point and the Programme Operator shall decide on the complaint within ten (10) working days from the date of receipt of the complaint and shall notify the applicant thereof by an e-mail. The Committee's decision is irrevocable.

Stage 5: Adoption of the Funding Decision

A Funding Decision can only be adopted for grant applications that have successfully passed all the previous stages of the grant award procedure. The Funding Decision shall be adopted jointly for all grant applications that are included in the financial envelope according to the ranking list, and additional funding decisions can be made in case additional funds are available.

The Funding Decision cannot be made before the expiry of the **standstill period**.



The standstill period includes the period two (2) working days within which the applicant is notified in writing of the status of his grant application after the budget clearing phase and the period of eight (8) working days which he has on his disposal to file a complaint to the Committee. The stated period cannot be longer than ten (10) working days.

If the complaint has been filed in this period, the Funding Decision cannot be adopted before the Committee has made its decision. In such cases, the standstill period shall also include the period within which the Committee shall decide on the complaint. This period may not exceed ten (10) working days. In any case, the standstill period cannot exceed twenty (20) working days, counting from the day when the applicant was notified in writing of the status of his grant application after the completion of the budget clearing stage of the award procedure.

Prior to drafting the Funding Decision, the Programme Operator verifies whether there have occurred any changes or circumstances that could prevent the inclusion of the grant application in the Funding Decision or affect the integrity of the award procedure and may request additional information and statements from the applicant/partner.

The Funding Decision is made by the Minister and contains at least the following information on the selected grant applications:

- legal basis for making the Decision
- name, address and OIB of the applicant
- title of the grant application
- the maximum funds allocated to finance the eligible costs of the project
- co-funding rate
- technical data on State Treasury classifications and allocation codes
- if applicable, other elements related to financing (for example provisions concerning *de minimis* aid).

The Programme Operator will inform the applicants whose grant applications have been selected for funding by e-mail, containing the Decision and instructions on further action.

The decision of the Programme Operator on funding is definite and is not the object of complaint.

The Funding Decision shall be published on the Programme's web page:
<https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/>.



3.2. The Project Contract

For each approved project, a Project Contract shall be concluded between the Programme Operator and the Project Promoter.

The Project Contract shall include Special Conditions for project implementation, the Standard Terms and Conditions which are in accordance with the terms of the EEA Programme managed by the Programme Operator, the Project's Logical Framework, the project proposal (the Application Form which can be amended following the conclusions of the award procedure) and the Partnership Agreement (if applicable). These documents shall set out the terms and conditions of the grant assistance, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the Parties.

Before signing of the Project Contract, the successful applicant (Project Promoter) must submit a binding confirmation on the co-financing of the project to the Programme Operator (if applicable). The project approval notice shall contain a deadline for submitting such a confirmation. If the deadline is not met, the grant application shall be considered to have been withdrawn, unless a prolongation of the deadline is granted by the Programme Operator in writing.

Also, if applicable, the successful applicant (Project Promoter) shall also submit a signed Partnership Agreement with the partners he stated in the Partnership Declaration when submitting the project proposal. The Programme Operator shall inspect the compliance of the Agreement with the grant application submitted to the Call.

The obligations of the Project Promoter under the Project Contract shall be valid and enforceable under the law applicable to the Project Contract.

The grant award will be subject to the acceptance of the Project Contract, including the Special Conditions and the Standard Terms and Conditions for EEA Grants Programmes operated by Programme Operator.



4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECTS

All provisions and requirements related to the implementation of projects are set out in the Project Contract with the Special Conditions, as well as the Standard terms and Conditions.

Following the signing of the Project Contracts under this Call, the Programme Operator will organize at least one implementation workshop for project promoters related to all aspects of project management, payment requests or reporting to the Programme Operator.

4.1. Payments to the Projects

Under this Call, Project Promoters will be granted advance payments and interim payments (in one or more payments) and final payments, as follows:

Project duration	Advance payment	Interim payments	Final payment
12-18 months	Up to 30%	At least 40%	At least 30%
18-21 months	Up to 20%	At least 60%	At least 20%

The methods of payments will be further regulated by the provisions of the Project Contract.

The dynamics of the payments to the beneficiaries will be defined by the project contract and will be linked to the prior approval of the Project Promoter's report by the Programme Operator.

4.2. Reporting

The submission of narrative and financial reports is a mandatory condition for the execution of the interim and final payments. Interim reports shall be submitted quarterly, and the final report at the project completion.

Reports must be approved and costs verified by the Programme Operator before payments are made. The Programme Operator can request additional information on the implementation progress at any time. The number and the dynamics of submission of Interim Monitoring Reports



(includes narrative and financial part) by the Project Promoter will be defined in the Project Contract.

The final narrative and financial report supporting the final payment claim shall be submitted by the Project Promoter within 45 calendar days after the project completion.

4.3. Information and Communication

In accordance with the provisions of Article 1.7 of the Regulation, Project Promoters are obliged to carry out information and communication activities to ensure the visibility and availability of project information to all relevant stakeholders. A Project Promoter is particularly obliged to highlight the funding of Donor States, as well as the general objective of the Financial Mechanisms. Applicants are required to develop a Communication plan alongside the grant application as an integral part of the grant application. In accordance with paragraph 2.3. Annex 3 to the Regulation, the Communication plan shall cover at least the project implementation period and shall include at least the following elements:

1. communication objectives and target groups, including stakeholders at national, regional and/or local level and the general public – project promoters must ensure that they reach the widest possible audience, including important stakeholders at the appropriate (e.g., local/regional) level
2. the strategy and content of information and communication measures, including activities, communication tools and timeframe, having regard to the added value and impact of the EEA Grants' funding
3. at least three information activities on progress, achievements and results in the project, such as a seminar or a conference with stakeholders, a press conference or press event, including a launch activity and/or a closing activity for the project.

For projects receiving less than € 500,000 support (in HRK equivalent on the day of publication of the Call), two information activities are sufficient and can be of smaller scale.

4. measures for making information on the project available on the web, either through a dedicated website or through a dedicated webpage on the organisation's existing website with linking between the pages, or, alternatively, through an active social media profile for the project where a website does not already exist.



Where a social media profile is created for a project, the social media profile shall remain visible and all information shall remain accessible after the final eligibility date of the project.

5. all projects receiving a minimum of € 150,000 support (in HRK equivalent on the day of publication of the Call), or having a Donor Project Partner shall be required to have the dedicated project information in English as well as in Croatian
6. information on the administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementation of the information and communication measures, including a contact person
7. an indication of how the information and communication measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness of the project and the EEA Grants, their objectives and impact, and the role of Donor States
8. all projects financing of a physical object, infrastructure or construction works shall be required to put up a billboard during the implementation of the project at the site of the implementation, in line with requirements of the Communication and Design Manual
The Project Promoter shall be required to replace the billboard with a permanent commemorative plaque that is visible, of significant size, and in line with the Communication and Design Manual no later than six months after completion of the project.

When designing, planning, and organizing all communication activities, project promoters must explicitly highlight the support of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism (logo and financial statement). Also, participants in project activities must be informed about project funding from the Local Development and Poverty Reduction Programme, as well as funding from Donor States.

Annex 3 of the Regulation in English is available for download at the following link:

<https://eeagrants.org/resources/regulation-implementation-eea-grants-2014-2021-annex-3-information-and-communication>

Visibility standards, materials and information boards are available in the Communication and Design Manual for Project Promoters funded by the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, developed by the Financial Mechanisms Office, available for download at the following link:

<https://eeagrants.org/resources/2014-2021-communication-and-design-manual>

When checking the eligibility of the project and activities, the Programme Operator will assess the compliance of the communication plan with the regulatory requirements set out in this point of the Call.



4.4. Requirements Regarding the Sustainability of Project Results

The applicant is required to ensure that achieved project results will be operational for at least 5 years after the Programme Operator approves the Final Project Report.

In accordance with Article 8.3 (2) of the Regulation, the project promoter is required to:

- keep the equipment in its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use that equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period
- keeps the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project
- set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

Also, in the case of the purchase of real estate or land, in accordance with Article 8.6., paragraph d) of the Regulation and Annex I of the Programme Agreement, the Project Promoter is obliged to:

- the real estate and/or the land shall be used for the purpose and for the period specified in the decision to award the project grant. The ownership must be transferred to the Project Promoter, or those explicitly designated by the Project Promoter in the project application as recipients of the real estate and/or the land, prior to the completion of the project. The real estate and/or the land cannot be sold, rented, or mortgaged within five years of the completion of the project, or longer if stipulated in the project contract. The FMC may waive this restriction if it would result in an unreasonable burden on the Project Promoter;
- Keep any buildings **purchased, renovated or reconstructed** under the project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;
- Keep any buildings **purchased, renovated, or reconstructed** under the project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the project; and



- Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings **purchased, renovated, or reconstructed** under the project for at least 5 years following the completion of the project.

In view of the abovementioned, the obligations of the Project Promoter will be defined in the Project Contract. Applicants under Component B shall submit an investment study covering the period of at least 5 years after the project implementation (see example in Annex 5). As part of the sustainability plans, applicants shall specify the plan for the use of the equipment acquired in the sustainability period, as well as elaborate on the functioning of the Centre in the sustainability period (method of continuation of activities, plan for the use of the Centre, plans for expansion of coverage, management structure, etc.). The content and quality of the sustainability plan is evaluated within the quality assessment of the project proposal.



5. OTHER

The Programme Operator reserves the right to amend the Call during its implementation, provided that the amendments do not jeopardize the equal treatment of the grant applicants in quality assessment.

The Programme Operator reserves the right to extend the deadline for submission of grant applications, as well as to suspend and/or close the Call before its planned deadline for applications if it deems necessary.

Notice of any amendments to the Call shall be published on the LDPR Programme's website <https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/>.

5.1. Questions and Answers

All inquiries concerning the Call should be directed to ldpr@mrrfeu.hr. The question asked must include a clear reference to the Call. All answers will be published on the LDPR Programme's website at <https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/> no later than 7 calendar days before the deadline for the submission of the grant applications.

Questions may be sent to the Programme Operator no later than fourteen (14) calendar days before the deadline for the submission of grant applications. The Programme Operator has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

5.2. Workshops for Applicants

Workshops for applicants on the Calls' purpose and focus, as well as on how to fill in the application form will be organized as an online event and video from the event will be available at the Programme's web site. Workshops for applicants will be organized no later than 21 calendar days before the deadline for submission of grant applications. Information on the exact date and place of the workshops will be published on the LDPR Programme's website: <https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/>.



5.3. Schedule of events

Deadline for the submission of questions	For Component A: 14/7/2021
	For Component B: 13/8/2021
Deadline for publication of the answers	For Component A: 21/7/2021
	For Component B: 20/8/2021
Informative workshops for applicants	No later than 21 calendar days before the deadline for the submission of grant Applications
Deadline for the submission of grant Applications	For Component A: 28/7/2021, 16:00 (CET)
	For Component B: 27/8/2021, 16:00 (CET)
Deadline for the adoption of Funding Decision	For Component A: 24/1/2022
	For Component B: 23/2/2022

5.4 Publication of the results of the Call

Funding Decisions, information on signed contracts with Project Promoters, the amount of grants awarded and a brief description of each funded project will be published on the Programme's website: <https://eeagrants.hr/en/programs/local-development-and-poverty-reduction/>.



FORMS AND ANNEXES

Forms:

1. Application form
2. Applicant/Partner statement
3. Partnership declaration
4. De minimis declaration

Annexes:

1. Draft Partnership Agreement
2. Project Activities Eligibility Verification Form
3. Quality Assessment Form - Component A
4. Quality Assessment Form - Component B
5. Investment Study Example
6. Rules Regarding State Aid