

Open call

for

identification of challenges in blue economy sectors that could be solved by innovative marine technologies

1. Introduction

The open call is implemented within the scope of the project **Cross-border Digital Innovation Hub for Innovative Marine Technology - DIH InnovaMare**, which is financed by the Interreg Italy - Croatia 2021-2027 cross-border cooperation program aimed at expanding the cross-border innovation ecosystem (the DIH) established as part of the InnovaMare strategic project. The project will convert data, knowledge, and resources owned in its ecosystem into services that will enable the transfer of knowledge and technology from scientific research institutions to the private sector.

Project partners:

- [Croatian Chamber of Economy](#) (CCE) (Croatia) – Lead partner;
- [Apulia Regional Agency for Technology and Innovation](#) (ARTI) – Italy
- [University of Zadar](#) (UNIZD) – Croatia
- [Wireless and More SRL](#) (W&M) – Italy
- [Ruđer Bošković Institute](#) (RBI) – Croatia
- [National Research Council of Italy](#) (CNR) – Italy
- [Šibenik Knin County](#) (SKC) – Croatia
- [Regional Union of the Chambers of Commerce of Veneto Region](#) (UCV) - Italy

Associated Partners:

- University of Padua (Italy)
- HAMAG-BICRO – Croatian Agency for Small Business, Innovation and Investment (Croatia)
- Port System Authority of the Northern Adriatic Sea – Ports of Venice and Chioggia (Italy)
- Veneto Innovazione SpA (Italy)

The purpose of this open call is to **identify challenges from different sectors in the blue economy that can be addressed by innovative marine technologies with the aim to improve processes, enable digital transformation and lower negative impact on the Adriatic Sea**. The challenges identified through this open call will serve as the foundation for **an innovation competition** aimed at stakeholders from Croatia and Italy across various sectors, including private industry and academia. Innovation competition will include different stakeholders that will be organized as teams who will work on innovative solutions to solve the challenges detected on this open call. This innovation competition will be conducted in partnership with prominent financial institutions, such as Hamag-Bicro, venture capital firms, private equity funds, and multinational companies.



The selected challenges and organizations will benefit from the following:

1. Awareness raising and reaching a wide innovation ecosystem with their challenges for potential partnerships,
2. Access and partnership with solution providers who are part of innovation competition working on solving your challenges,
3. Receive support in creating partnership consortium between organization's that identified challenges and solution providers to create EU-funded projects

2. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this open call are those who meet the following criteria:

1. **Geographical Location:** Applicants must be based in either Croatia or Italy, as the call is part of the Interreg Italy - Croatia 2021-2027 cross-border cooperation program.
2. **Sector:** Applicants should be involved in traditional or emerging blue economy sectors. This includes, but is not limited to, private and public companies, ports, local and regional authorities, scientific research organizations and other relevant organizations.
3. **Type of Organization:** Eligible applicants can be from various types of organizations, including private industry, academia, research institutions, and public sector entities.
4. **Role:** Applicants should have a vest interest in solving the submitted challenges related to the blue economy and the Adriatic Sea.

Challenges examples:

Overexploitation of Marine Resources

Unsustainable fishing practices threaten fish stocks and marine biodiversity.

Pollution and Habitat Degradation

Marine plastic pollution, chemical runoff, and oil spills harm ecosystems and reduce the quality of coastal and marine environments.

Fragmented governance of maritime zones creates challenges in managing shared resources and enforcing international agreements.

Limited access to modern technology hampers productivity and sustainability in sectors like aquaculture and marine renewable energy.

Impact of Climate Change on Blue Economy Sectors

Rising Sea Temperatures: Ocean warming affects fish migration patterns and reduces the productivity of key fish stocks, jeopardizing food security.

Extreme Weather Events:

Storms and hurricanes damage infrastructure, disrupt tourism operations, and deter visitors.

Shipping and Ports

Port infrastructure faces increased risk of flooding and damage, requiring costly adaptations.

Maritime Security



3. Submission guidelines

Submission must contain the following:

- **Contact Information:** Provide your name, organization, and contact details
- **Challenge Description:** Clearly outline the specific challenge you have identified. Please include the following:
 - Context and background information
 - Importance of addressing this challenge
 - Current impacts on the blue economy
 - Which are your vested interest in solving issues related to the blue economy and the Adriatic Sea.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Indicate which stakeholders are affected by this challenge and how they could be engaged in potential solutions.

4. Submission information and deadline

The submissions will be made via the form on this [link](#).

Each organization can apply 2 challenges maximum.

All submissions must be made not later than the **1st of February 2025**.

5. Review process information

The selected challenges will be announced on the project's webpage no later than the **15th of March 2025**.

Review criteria:

- Relevance to blue economy sectors
- Innovation potential
- Feasibility of proposed solutions
- Impact on stakeholders

6. Contact information of the organizer

All inquiries regarding the open call can be addressed to e-mail address: jpletikotic@hgk.hr

