DOORS Call for Proposal:

Guide for applicants

- **Call opening: 1st August 2022**
- **Call deadline: 30th September 2022, 23:59 CET**

Deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Any submission past deadline will not be considered.

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Art, Technology & Society

MUSEUM BOOSTER

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SCIENCE CENTRES & MUSEUMS

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About DOORS

Initiated by Ars Electronica, MUSEUM BOOSTER and Ecsite, **DOORS – Digital Incubator for Museums,** seeks to give small and medium-sized museums across Europe an opportunity to steer the direction of the sector's digital transformation. The project wants to reduce the digitalisation gap by creating the space for small institutions to voice their needs and offering them access to knowledge, resources, expertise, and an **incubation and skill-building programme**.

During 2 years, experts from the museum sector, creative & tech industry and the consortium will cover several objectives:

- Identify and assess the digital needs of the European museum community.
- Engage 40 museums and tandems of cultural organisations in a unique incubation programme.
- Create an incubator for museums to address their digital transformation and enable the development and realisation of pilot projects together with experienced technical partners.
- Foster collaborations and exchanges among museums, experts from the creative and tech industry and cross-fertilisation with other sectors.

DOORS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement no. 101036071.

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DOORS incubation programme

Through an open call, DOORS has already involved 40 museums (and collaborative tandems) in a shared learning program during its first stage of incubation which took place from April to June 2022. The project will further support the realization of 20 innovative pilots focused on digital transformation and empowerment in the second incubation stage. Pilots must be developed in one of the four concrete innovation areas:

- Innovating audience analysis and engagement
- New content distributions and revenue models
- Strategies for integrating infrastructures
- Experimental ICT programs

Second incubation stage: Pilot development and implementation

The second stage of the incubation programme is the time for the 20 pilots to become a reality. For 9 months, from November 2022 until July 2023, museums will navigate the implementation of their digital pilots together with a digital solution provider, supported through exchange sessions and continuing mentoring.

A series of workshops will allow further joint practical investigation of the defined innovation areas. Along with their implementation journeys, institutions working on the same innovation area will part-take in three Progress Sharing Sessions to present their work and receive feedback. The particularity of each pilot will be addressed in four Individual Mentoring Sessions. Sustainability workshops held during the Ecsite Conference (June 2023) will address the long-term impact of the digital strategies developed.

For this second stage, beneficiaries can receive up to €27.000 per pilot to fund activities needed to implement their digital pilots and take a step towards their digital transformation.

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Timeline of the incubation programme
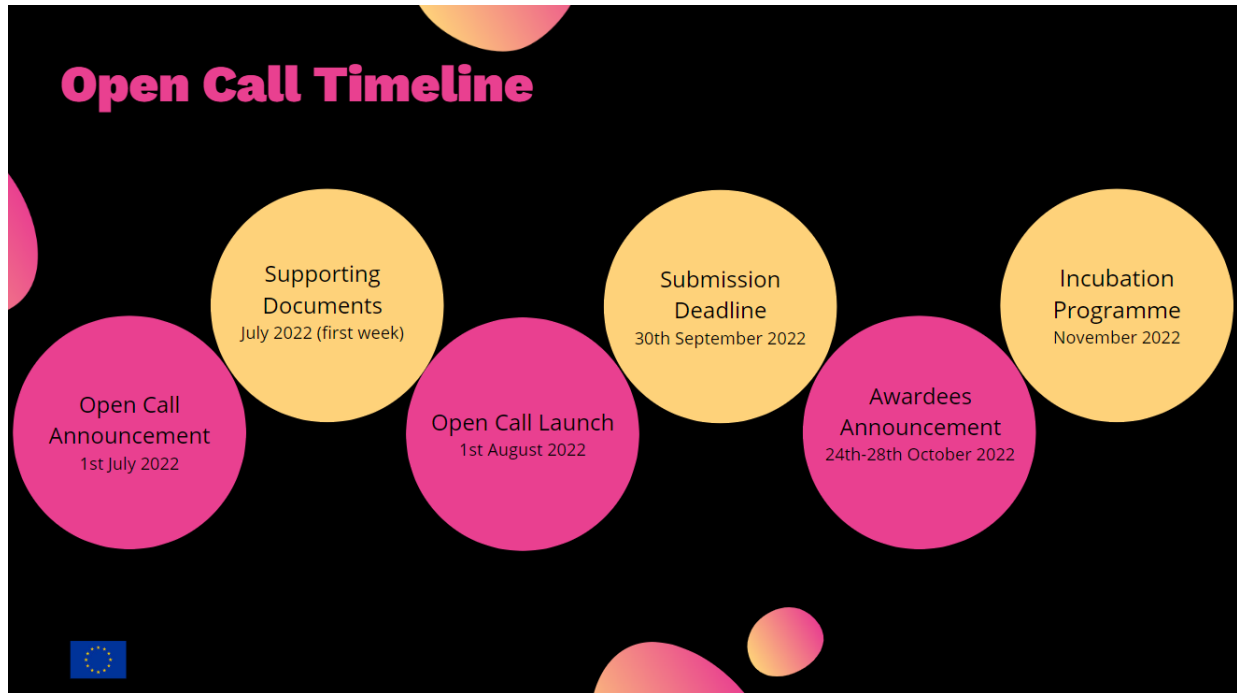
Call for proposal stage 2: General information

This call for proposals is **open only to those 40 museums that have already been involved in the first stage**. Thus, DOORS invites these applicants to submit full project proposals for the second and final selection stage. The selected organisations can receive up to €27.000 per pilot to fund activities needed to implement their digital pilots.

This refined version of the initial proposal from stage 1 should be the blueprint of the pilot project, highlighting notably the changes and improvements to the pilot

proposal based on the learnings from the first incubation stage. It should include a well-defined work and resources plan and a detailed and realistic outline of the partnership with a digital solution provider (DSP). Working with a DSP is a requirement for the second stage of incubation. If a DSP hasn't been selected at the time of the proposal submission, you need to mention the type of DSP you'd like to work with on the pilot.

A change of Innovation Area (IA) from the first to the second stage is possible if you deem another IA to be more relevant to your pilot. Each innovation area is described in the dedicated section.

Eligible activities for the pilots

This call is for the development and implementation of the pilot activities linked with the digital transformation of your organisation.

Type of activities

Pilot activities can target different fields of digitalisation in museums such as collections and asset management, content production and preservation, access control and mediation, marketing and sales, communication, administration and governance, human resources, and technical and IT infrastructure.

Applicants can submit proposal targeting digital innovation for online services (digital presence on the web and mobile access), for onsite services (including ICT such as big data or machine learning for analysing day-to-day processes or audiences) and services that bridge online and onsite worlds.

Funding can be spent on personnel costs, equipment/infrastructure, staff training, services and any other cost items deemed eligible and of relevance to the institution's digital transformation.

The grant **cannot cover a project that is not based on your first pilot proposal**. Synergies with other sources of funding are encouraged as long as the grants are used for complementary, not overlapping purposes.

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Innovation areas

All proposed actions in the pilot need to cover one of the 4 innovation areas:

- **Innovating audience analysis and engagement**: Developing innovative (hybrid and online) audience engagement formats to strengthen audience participation and loyalty. Pilots should develop interaction, participation and mediation tools and technologies for presentation based as well as hands-on & two-way communication formats. Experiments should include an appropriate audience analysis and assessment of the best engagement platform (web, social media, app, etc).

- **New distribution & revenue models**: Pilots should experiment with digital technologies, tools and existing platforms (developing web integration pilots) to enable novel ways of content distribution and revenue models (e.g. membership subscription, etc). Participants can work on increasing visibility of digital contents, metadata standards, digital narration strategies, digital distribution channels, low-tech presentations or content varieties for different target groups (active vs. passive, digital vs. virtual) etc. Pilots in this innovation area will be encouraged to develop synergies and technical integration possibilities with major European cultural platform providers.

- **Strategies for integrating infrastructure**: To ensure diversity in TRL (technology readiness levels) and include museums with no or few ICT (information and communication technologies) pre-investments - according to UNESCO still the major obstacle for digitalisation sector -, this innovation area will specifically target infrastructural pilots integrating ICT. While the priority clearly lies on the integration process of the technology (including roll-out support, data security, value chain integration), pilots can include a part of the infrastructural purchase in the overall budget (up to 40%) if duly justified and proportional.

- **Experimental ICT program**: Sharing efforts and synergies within this collaborative innovation area should allow organisations to experiment with digital pilots one individual museum alone would be unable to. This innovation area seeks to encourage experimental pilots which change the use, application or perception of ICT (Information and Communication

Technologies) innovation in the museum sector. Due to the collaborative nature of this innovation area, single-institution applications are not eligible.

Timeline for the pilot delivery

To ensure the sustainability of the pilots, the projects will be evaluated against alignment with the general institutional development strategy. However, the first tangible results, respectively outlined/defined in the application, need to be achieved and presented at the Ecsite Conference (June 2023) and in pilots' reports completed by the end of incubation stage 2 (July 2023).

Eligible costs

The €27.000 grant may be spent on eligible costs. These are costs that meet the following criteria:

- Incurred by the applicant in connection with or during the project;
- Identifiable and verifiable in the applicant's accounts;
- Compliant with national law;
- Reasonable, justified in accordance with sound financial management (economy and efficiency);
- Indicated in the budget you submitted with the short proposal.

DOORS will provide guidance to all funded pilots on financial matters. All costs should be stated inclusive of any irrecoverable VAT.

Eligible costs are:

- **Personnel costs**: Applicants can spend funds on staff who are directly involved in the execution of the project.
- **Equipment costs**: See below
- **Consumables, other goods and services**: Applicants can spend on consumables and other goods and services (including travel), if they are directly relevant for the achievement of the project.

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- **Subcontracting**: Applicants may subcontract some of their activities to other parties as long as they are also from a H2020 eligible country. Note that we expect the applicant to carry out most of the tasks of the project.

Additional information about eligible cost for infrastructure

If equipment, research infrastructure and other assets are acquired, only the portion of the depreciation costs allocable to the project is eligible for funding, not the purchase price. The **depreciation rates** must be calculated according to the usual internal practice of the beneficiary under recognition of national and international rules and standards. Equipment with a useful life in excess of the project duration can only be reimbursed to the extent the asset would be depreciated for the nine-month project period.

There is no hard-and-fast rule about the distinction between equipment and other costs; small items such as sensors may be budgeted as 'other goods and services'.

The costs of **equipment rental** for the project period can be charged at full cost, as long as the rental cost is not greater than the depreciation cost had the equipment been purchased.

How to apply

We have prepared a **proposal template** for your application. You need to download it and create your own copy to work on. The structure of this template must be followed when preparing your proposal. It has been designed to ensure that the important aspects of your planned project are presented in a way that will enable the experts to effectively assess against the evaluation criteria. More instructions on how to use the template are available on the first page "DOORS proposal template".

The proposal must be emailed as a **PDF file** (max. size 10 MB) to doors@ars.electronica.art before **September 30th 2022, 23:59 CEST**. Any application received after the deadline will be automatically rejected.

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Selection criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria by the jury:

PILOT IDEA EXCELLENCE
- Core idea
- Innovation potential
- Relevance of the technology used
- Evolvement from stage 1 to stage 2

IMPACT
- Value Proposition
- Sustainability of the pilot
- Potential social impact of the pilot
- Potential economic impact of the pilot

PILOT IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTNERSHIP
- Work plan of your pilot project (action plan with work packages, milestones, and a timeline of delivery)
- Target groups analysis
- Project Outcomes
- Human resources and skills:
- Partnership implementation
- Budget
- Pilot project self-assessment

Nb. Other criteria will be in focus depending on the Innovation area chosen.

To ensure a diverse and inclusive portfolio of institutions and pilots that cover all **innovation areas, institutions sizes and geographical areas,** grants will not only be awarded based on ranking. The highest ranked proposals from each part of the territory of the European Union and Associated Countries will be prioritised, provided that these applications attain all thresholds.

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Selection process

Evaluation of the second stage will take place in October 2022. The evaluation will be conducted by external jury members and experts selected to ensure the best possible expertise and transparency of the evaluation process.

After a check from the DOORS teams on the conformity of each submission, the proposals will be reviewed in two steps:

- **Step 1: Individual review and selection**

Each proposal will be reviewed and scored by two jury members against the criteria listed in the section "Selection criteria". Jury members will be asked to provide an overall score, on a 5 points scale, as well as recommendations of shortlisted applications.

- **Step 2: Final Group review**

All jury members will come together for a group discussion to ensure consistency of the evaluation and scoring transparency in the evaluation process.

Public announcement of the call results

Results will be published on the DOORS website and announced to participants end of October 2022. All the participants will be contacted individually and receive a summary of their evaluation based on the evaluation form.

Administrative arrangements

Successful applicants will be invited to join the second stage of incubation for 9 months, following a short negotiation that will take place at the beginning of November 2022. During the negotiation, applicants and the DOORS consortium will agree on a timeline, milestones and deliverables to amend the beneficiary third-party agreement signed in the first stage.

Selected pilots will receive a fixed lump sum of up to €27.000. Payments for the pilot incubation stage 2 will be linked to either milestones or deliverables as agreed during the negotiation phase and paid in 3 tranches based on the total budget of the pilot:

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- **Pre-financing** of 70% of the total budget required for the application after the signature of the amended version of the Agreement.
- **Second payment** (15% of the total budget) after the reception of <u>deliverable(s)</u> agreed during the negotiations.
- **The remaining amount** (15%) will be paid after the end of the DOORS project once the costs declared are approved by the European Commission.

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ANNEX 1: What to expect in the 2nd stage

The second stage of the incubation programme is the time for the pilots to become a reality. Museums will navigate the implementation of their pilot, supported by exchange sessions and continuing mentoring. It will be composed of the following elements:

- Monthly **"Open Hour Sessions"** to enable a frequent exchange between partners and the discussion of collective questions.
- **Peer-to-peer Scheme**: Each pilot will be assigned with a "buddy organisation" (from the pool of other piloting organisation) to foster peer-review and support in the incubation phase.
- **6 inspiration sessions** every two month on clustered topics focusing on external best practices examples.
- **3 workshops** over the course of the incubation period on topics related to the Innovation Areas.
- **3 Progress sharing sessions** where projects of each Innovation area will present their progress and receive feedback.
- **4 Individual mentoring sessions**: each pilot will receive three mentoring sessions from one expert mentor and an additional mentoring unit by a second mentor from a different expertise area.
- **Sustainability workshops** as part of the second public conference taking place during the Ecsite Conference to present all pilots outcomes to museum operators across Europe and enable a systemic pilot take-over from interested stakeholders.