

## **Call for the Selection of Financial Intermediaries**

Zagreb, March 2025

## DEFINITIONS

**Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)** - Investment fund established for the purpose of raising funds through a public or private offer from investors and investing of these funds in accordance with the predetermined strategy and investment objective of the AIF, and exclusively for the benefit of shareholder of that AIF;

**Management Company (MC)** - Legal entity with headquarters in the Republic of Croatia which, based on the approval of the Croatian Financial Services Supervisory Agency, carries out the activity of managing one or more AIFs or a legal entity with its headquarters in another EU Member State which, based on the approval of the competent authority of that Member State, carries out the activity of managing one or more AIFs;

**EU** – European Union;

**Financial Intermediary** - AIF management company or other legal entity that advises an AIF and/or a special purpose vehicle with the aim of implementing an Investment;

**Final Beneficiary** – Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (private sector business entities) in accordance with the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (OJ L 124, 20.5.2003) and mid-cap companies (up to 3,000 employees) belonging to one of investment stages: *Seed, Start-up, Later stage venture, Growth capital, Replacement capital, Buyout*, in accordance with the definition of investment stages pursuant to the Invest Europe<sup>1</sup> methodology;

**Investor's Payment Commitment** - commitment of the investor to pay a certain amount (regardless of whether that amount is paid in full or in part or whether the investor is refunded that amount in full or in part), which amount, in addition to equity and quasi-equity financing of Final Beneficiaries, is used to cover fees, costs and other expenses related to the investment;

**Investment Opportunity** – proposal received from a MC (established or planned to be established) for an investment in AIF containing at least the following documents or information: project description with market overview, investment strategy and management structure (including CVs of MC team members), key information on the target investment size (including information on participation of other investors), terms and conditions of investment in terms of manner of implementation, duration and costs, and financial plan;

**Investment Programme** or only Programme – Alternative Investment Funds Investment Programme;

**RC** – Republic of Croatia.

<sup>1</sup> Invest Europe, Glossary and methodology: <https://www.investeurope.eu/media/2784/invest-europe-research-methodology-and-definitions.xlsx>

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Call for the Selection of Financial Intermediaries (hereinafter: the Call) is the selection of Financial Intermediaries that will manage alternative investment funds in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Investment Programme<sup>2</sup>.

HBOR has provided its own funds (hereinafter: HBOR funds) for the implementation of the Alternative Investment Funds Investment Programme (hereinafter referred to as: the Programme). HBOR invests the abovementioned funds **exclusively through financial intermediaries**, i.e. **alternative investment funds** (hereinafter referred to as: AIF), in its own name and for its own account.

The goal of the Programme is to enhance the availability and diversify the sources of finance for Croatian companies, enabling entrepreneurs to access capital through investments of alternative investment funds. The Programme is aimed at financing innovative projects of start-up companies, SMEs and mid-cap companies with high growth potential.

**The emphasis is on investments that contribute to economic and social development, in line with sustainability goals and promotion of balanced and sustainable regional development in the Republic of Croatia.**

**There is no legal title to obtain investment, but HBOR makes a separate decision on each application for investment.** HBOR retains full discretion when deciding on the amount of investment in an individual AIF. When making investment decisions, HBOR will take into account strategic interests of HBOR and RC.

Applicants must fulfil the conditions of this Call and the Programme.

HBOR reserves the right to change the terms and conditions stated in this Call, and all possible changes will be published on the web page [www.hbor.hr](http://www.hbor.hr).

## 1. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF INVESTMENT

#### 1. AIFs

Eligible AIFs:

- i. AIFs in the process of establishment or existing AIFs;
- ii. Established in the EU or to be established in the EU;
- iii. Have a defined investment period in line with market practice (usually 5 years, with the possibility of extension in accordance with the AIF's contractual documentation);
- iv. Have a limited duration (usually not exceeding 10 years, with the possibility of extension in accordance with the AIF's contractual documentation).

#### 2. Financial Intermediaries

Financial Intermediaries are companies that manage AIF or other legal entities that advise AIF and/or special purpose vehicle with the aim of making investments in equity and quasi-equity financing of Final Beneficiaries.

Financial Intermediary must meet the following basic conditions:

- i. Members of the management team of the Financial Intermediary must invest own funds in AIF;

<sup>2</sup> Alternative Investment Funds Investment Programme (AIFs) is available at [\(LINK\)](#).

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- ii. All investors in AIF must have equal investment conditions (*pari-passu* principle);
  - iii. The Financial Intermediary must ensure investment of Private Investors in an amount corresponding to at least 30% of the total size of the AIF;
  - iv. The commitment of any investor shall not exceed 50% of the total size of the AIF, except in the case of the establishment of a technology transfer fund where the share of an individual investor may be higher;
  - v. As part of the AIF's investment strategy, they intend to invest at least the amount of HBOR's payment obligation in the areas listed in Annex II. of the Regulation Establishing the InvestEU Programme<sup>3</sup>;
  - vi. As part of the AIF's investment strategy, they intend to invest in Final Beneficiaries which, at the time of the AIF's first investment in them, are established in the Republic of Croatia and carry out the majority of their business in the Republic of Croatia or are planning an investment that will start long-term business in the Republic of Croatia (indicated, for example, by a significant workforce in the Republic of Croatia or otherwise). The amount of investment in such Final Beneficiaries must meet one of the following two criteria:
    - 70% of the total size of the EIF, or
    - Double amount of HBOR's commitment to pay into the AIF (for every euro of HBOR's commitment, AIF must invest one additional euro at least).
  - vii. Must be familiar with the Croatian business environment, and it is desirable to ensure presence on the Croatian market by establishing subsidiaries or offices in the Republic of Croatia with an appropriate team including investment professionals located in the Republic of Croatia who are able to operate in the Croatian business environment (including adequate language skills) for the entire duration of the AIF;
  - viii. Must be established in the EU or will be established in the EU;
  - ix. Has a developed or is developing or are willing to develop an ESMS (Environmental and Social Management System) or ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) framework to be used throughout the lifetime of the AIF;
  - x. When investing in Final Beneficiaries, where applicable, implement all necessary assessments so that such investment does not cause significant harm (abbreviation: DNSH) to the EU's environmental objectives in terms of the DNSH principle in accordance with Article 17 of the Regulation (EU) 2020/852<sup>4</sup>.

HBOR's commitment to pay into the AIF will generally be at least 7.5% of the total size of the AIF, and not more than 25% of the total size of the AIF.

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<sup>3</sup> REGULATION (EU) 2021/523 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 March 2021 on establishing the InvestEU programme and amending Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 (SL L 107, 26.3.2021) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R0523>

<sup>4</sup> REGULATION (EU) 2020/852 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 June 2020 on establishing a framework to facilitate sustainable investment and amending the Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020R0852&from=EN>

If the AIF, in addition to the basic conditions, meets any of the additional conditions listed below, HBOR may consider a higher share of HBOR's obligation to pay into such AIF, as follows:

- i. up to 50% of the total AIF size:
  - if the AIF's investment strategy is focused on regional development (projects and companies from economically less developed areas, e.g. supported areas, the islands and hill or mountain areas of the Republic of Croatia<sup>5</sup>); or
  - if AIF is managed by a team without prior joint experience in AIF management; or
  - if AIF is managed by a gender balanced team;
- ii. up to 70% of the total AIF size:
  - if the AIF's investment strategy is focused on technology transfer.

The amount of HBOR's payment commitment in a particular AIF may amount to a maximum of EUR 25 million.

### 3. Private Investors

Private Investors are considered to be:

- i. Privately owned financial institutions (investing at their own risk and from their own resources);
- ii. Funds of funds:
  - a. those classified as an alternative investment fund under the Directive on Alternative Investment Fund Managers<sup>6</sup>,
  - b. those that are managed or advised by an independent management team,
  - c. those whose majority sponsors are not Member States or national promotional banks or institutions or the EIF or the European Investment Bank;
- iii. private foundations and funds;
- iv. family offices and business angels;
- v. corporate investors in majority private ownership;
- vi. insurance companies;
- vii. pension funds;
- viii. private persons;
- ix. academic institutions (including private research institutions and universities) investing their own funds arising from their commercial activities;

<sup>5</sup> Special areas of the Republic of Croatia:

- Supported area – Units of local and regional government classified in group I, II, III or IV in accordance with the Act on Regional Government of the Republic of Croatia (Narodne Novine, the Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia Nos. 147/2014, 123/2017, 118/2018) and the Decision on Classification of Units of Local and Regional Government According to the Level of Development (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia No. 3/2024) and all its changes and amendments.
- Hill or mountain areas – Areas in accordance with the Act on Hill or Mountain Areas (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia No. 118/2018) and the Decision on the Scope and Classification of Units of Local and Regional Government that Acquire the Status of Hill or Mountain Areas (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia No. 24/2019) and all its changes and amendments.
- The islands – In accordance with the Islands Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia Nos. 116/2018, 73/2020, 70/2021) and all its changes and amendments.

<sup>6</sup> DIRECTIVE 2011/61/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 8 June 2011 on Alternative Investment Fund Managers and amending regulations 2003/41/EC and 2009/65/EC and the regulations (EC) No. 1060/2009 and (EU) No. 1095/2010

	if they do not receive any public incentive for the purpose of investing in the AIF in which they will invest funds.
<b>4. Final Beneficiaries</b>	<p><b>Eligible Final Beneficiaries</b> are micro, small and medium-sized companies<sup>7</sup> and mid-cap companies<sup>8</sup> (up to 3,000 employees) belonging to one of the below listed stages of investment in accordance with the Invest Europe<sup>9</sup> methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seed,</li> <li>• Start-up,</li> <li>• Later stage venture,</li> <li>• Growth capital,</li> <li>• Replacement capital,</li> <li>• Buyout.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ineligible Final Beneficiaries</b> are those:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. That carry out an activity on the List of ineligible activities<sup>10</sup>, and/or</li> <li>ii. That are „undertakings in difficulty“ pursuant to the provisions of Article 2(18) of the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014<sup>11</sup> of 17 June 2014 and/or</li> <li>iii. The activity of which, at the moment of the AIF's investment, constitutes a violation of restrictive measures (<i>Restricted Person</i>).</li> </ol>
<b>5. Visibility</b>	<p>In communication about the investment, Financial Intermediaries and Final Beneficiaries are obliged to highlight the visibility sign of the source of financing. During negotiations with Financial Intermediaries, the form and manner of highlighting the source of financing will be determined.</p> <p>The Financial Intermediary will be obliged to embed in the contractual documentation with Final Beneficiaries the provisions relating to visibility.</p>
<b>6. Purpose and Manner of Investment</b>	<p>Equity and quasi-equity investments in Final Beneficiaries will be made from the AIFs' funds.</p> <p>Investments in Final Beneficiaries will be made indirectly, through AIFs managed by the Financial Intermediary (including structures that include holding companies managed by the Financial Intermediary).</p>

<sup>7</sup> Pursuant to the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (OJ L 124, 20.5.2003):

- Medium-sized enterprise employs fewer than 250 persons, has an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million;
- Small enterprise employs fewer than 50 persons and has annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 10 million;
- Micro enterprise employs fewer than 10 persons and has annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 2 million.

<sup>8</sup> Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015 on the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Advisory Hub and the European Investment Project Portal and amending Regulations (EU) No. 1291/2013 and (EU) No. 1316/2013 (OJ L 169, 1.7.2015):

- „small mid-cap companies“ means entities having up to 499 employees that are not SMEs;
- „mid-cap companies“ means entities having up to 3,000 employees that are not SMEs or small mid-cap companies.

<sup>9</sup> Invest Europe, Research methodology and definitions, available [here](#).

<sup>10</sup> The list of ineligible activities is published in the General Eligibility Criteria for Equity and Quasi-Equity Funding Instruments, available [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (OJ L 187 of 26 June 2014), or in accordance with the provisions of the regulation governing this issue, which will be in force at the time of contracting of HBOR's commitment of payment.

<b>7. Fees and Expenses</b>	When contracting the investor's payment obligation to the AIF, funds for the implementation of investments in Final Beneficiaries and management costs and other costs of the AIF are included in the total contracted amount of the investor's payment obligation.
<b>8. Implementation Period</b>	The Programme Implementation Period is until the funds have been exhausted.
<b>9. Miscellaneous</b>	<p>The contractual documentation on the basis of which HBOR will commit to pay into the AIF will include, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the rights of HBOR to inspect the documentation of AIF necessary for monitoring and reviewing the use of HBOR funds;</li> <li>• the obligation to keep the documentation on the use of HBOR funds;</li> <li>• obligations relating to Visibility;</li> <li>• the possibility of transferring interests in AIFs to other persons if requested by HBOR.</li> </ul>
<b>10. Related Documentation / Enclosures</b>	<p>General Eligibility Criteria for Equity and Quasi-Equity Funding Instruments, available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Policy for Investments in Equity and Quasi-Equity, available <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

## 2. SUBMISSION OF INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY FORM

Applicants submit the Investment Opportunity form to the e-mail address: [equity@hbor.hr](mailto:equity@hbor.hr).

Investment Opportunity form can be submitted either in Croatian or in English.

Financial Intermediary shall submit the filled in and signed Statement of Applicant (Schedule 1) confirming that it does not fulfil any of the mentioned exclusion criteria.

The Applicant assesses in what manner it can present best its Investment Opportunity form. Although the content is not strictly defined, it must include key information on the market, investment strategy, management company and similar aspects. Detailed guidelines about the content of this document can be found in Schedule 2 to this Call.

Upon receipt of the Investment Opportunity form, HBOR will confirm the receipt and check whether it includes all the information necessary for the first step of the selection process – preliminary review. If the documentation is complete, further steps of the selection process will be continued.

### 3. SELECTION PROCESS

Selection process of the Financial Intermediary is implemented through the following steps:

#### Step 1. Preliminary review

Preliminary review includes the overview of received Investment Opportunity forms contents.

Investment Opportunity forms that contain **all elements prescribed by the Call** continue the selection process.

If it is estimated for an individual Investment Opportunity form that some information is not clear enough and that additional explanations are necessary, they will be requested with a defined deadline for submission of explanations.

#### Step 2. Introducing the MC team

If it is established that the Investment Opportunity form meets the criteria of this Call, the Programme and the Investment Policy<sup>12</sup>, a **live meeting with the MC team will be held to establish the readiness of the team**. In exceptional cases, the meeting can be held via videoconference.

During the meeting, the Investment Opportunity form identified by the MC team is reviewed and HBOR's further selection process is explained. The goal of the meeting is to familiarise with the MC team, their experience, qualifications and mutual relationships within the team, decision-making methods, parameters of the future AIF, etc.

After the meeting, selection process will be continued for the selected MC teams. Those MC teams for which the selection process will not be continued will be notified thereon in writing, with a note that HBOR may continue the selection process for them in the next 12 months, if necessary (e.g. withdrawal of the selected MC team or similar.).

#### Step 3. Due diligence

For the purpose of due diligence, potential MC teams are sent a **questionnaire with a list of documents that need to be submitted**. After receiving the necessary documentation, it is analysed internally and upon completion of the analysis, a visit to the **MC team** at their premises is organised. If the MC is in the process of establishment and still has no official premises, the meeting can be held at another location.

Key areas are analysed during the due diligence process: strategy, integrity and reputation of the MC team, former experience, market knowledge, fund parameters.

#### Step 4. Selection

Upon completion of the due diligence process, the best Investment Opportunity (one or more) form is selected.

*This is an unofficial translation of the original text in Croatian. In case of discrepancies, the Croatian version will prevail.*

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<sup>12</sup> Policy for Investments in Equity and Quasi-Equity, available [here](#).