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ANNEX A

Information on the implementation of Step 1.2.2.1 – Number of funded actors in research and innovation (individuals – researchers and innovators, and legal entities – research institutions, business companies, clusters, and NGOs) in the National Research and Innovation System increased by 50%, with the impact of funding visible through improved positions in statistical reporting for science and innovation

Narrative overview of the implementation of calls/programmes of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation and the Innovation Fund of Montenegro, for which decisions were made and/or contracts signed in the period from 1 September 2024 to 31 December 2025

The Reform step 1.2.2.1 reflects the programme and financial strengthening of the system for financing innovation and scientific research activities, as well as the improvement of national research and development statistics and the maintenance of continuity in companies' innovative activities.

The continuous **growth of financial allocations for science, innovation, and technological development**, in the context of achievement of this step's indicator, can be monitored from 2021 onward. It coincides with the introduction of a new framework for the implementation of innovation policy and smart specialization, under which the national research and innovation system has been operating since that year, as well as with the introduction of program-based budgeting in Montenegro. The budget for research and development amounted to €5,012,422.27 in 2021, €7,717,132.78 in 2022, €12,562,547.49 in 2023, €14,997,925.29 in 2024, and is projected at €15,352,543.66 in 2025, with an additional increase of €6 million from the special economic citizenship program to support the development of innovation.

Thanks to the **strengthening of the programme and financial framework**, the implementation of this step is observed through national support schemes for innovation development implemented by the Innovation Fund of Montenegro, as well as through the implementation of strategic innovation programmes and projects and incentives in the field of scientific research activities, and programmes supporting participation in EU and international science and innovation programmes, implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI).

The **baseline year** is 2023, when 294 actors in the national research and innovation system (148 legal entities and 146 individuals) received support available within the national research and innovation system, while the indicator for this step is a 50% increase by December 2025. During the phase of defining reforms, steps, and step indicators in 2024, the European Commission accepted the justification whereby the baseline value for Step 1.2.2.1 is based on the 2023 annual activity reports of the Ministry of Education, Science



and Innovation and the Innovation Fund. This approach was taken given that national research and development statistics for 2023 were not available at the time of definition, and therefore an administrative database on implemented calls/competitions of the Ministry and the Fund was used. It is also worth noting that national research and development statistics for 2025 may only become available during 2026, and it can still not provide comparable data, given that the 2023 baseline relies on an administrative source (the annual reports of the Ministry and the Fund). Below is an overview of the programme lines that were considered when defining the baseline (2023).

Calls / programme lines of support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation in 2023¹:

- Call for co-financing national scientific research projects
- Call for co-financing scientific research activities in 2023
- Call for co-financing the costs of completed doctoral training
- Implementation of scholarships for doctoral research at universities in Montenegro
- Centres of Excellence Programme
- Public call for co-financing participation in EUREKA projects
- Support for participation in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon Europe – Pillar III “Innovative Europe”

Calls / programme lines of support of the Innovation Fund in 2023²:

- Startup pre-acceleration programme line
- Programme line supporting the early-stage development of startups
- Programme line for proof of innovative concept
- Programme line for strengthening the innovativeness of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises
- Voucher programme line for the protection and development of inventions
- Programme line for fostering innovation culture and the programme line for the implementation of educational programmes in the fields of Montenegro’s smart specialisation
- Programme line for fostering innovation aimed at improving energy efficiency in industry

¹ Report on work and status in administrative areas under the competences of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation in 2023 [Izvještaj o radu MPNI za 2023. godinu](#)

² Work report of the Innovation Fund for 2023 [Izvještaj-sa-dodatnim-dokumentima-potpisano.pdf](#)



During the reporting period, the Ministry and the Fund implemented a total of 28 support schemes and they are included in the report. The report covers 9 calls/programmes from 2024 and 19 calls/programmes from 2025, through which support was awarded to 630 actors in the research and innovation ecosystem, out of which 479 received support from the Ministry and 151 received support from the Innovation Fund. ***The report includes calls/programmes of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (Appendix I) and the Innovation Fund of Montenegro (Appendix II) that were published during 2024 and 2025, for which decisions were adopted and/or contracts signed in the period from 1 September 2024 to 31 December 2025.***

Calls of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation in 2024:

1. MESI24_1: Call for co-financing scientific research activities 2024 (51 decision on financing)
2. MESI24_2: Call for supporting participation in the EUREKA programme in 2024 (4 contracts on co-financing)
3. MESI24_3: Public call for the award of annual prizes for scientific achievements 2024 (decision on the award of funds to 4 beneficiaries)
4. MESI24_4: Call for the award of excellence scholarships for doctoral research in Montenegro 2024 (30 scholarships)
5. MESI24_5: Research Grants Programme for fostering excellence 2024 (6 grants)

Calls of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation in 2025:

6. MESI25_1: Call for projects of cooperation with the scientific diaspora 2025 (10 projects contracted)
7. MESI25_2: Call for postdoctoral research 2025 (7 contracts on co-financing)
8. MESI25_3: Call for support for participation in the Horizon Europe programme 2025 (52 contracts/decisions on financing)
9. MESI25_4: Public call “Science at Hand” for financing NGO projects and programmes in the field of science (6 projects contracted)
10. MESI25_5: Call for support for science promotion projects and innovative programmes within the “Days of Science and Innovation 2025” festival (15 projects contracted)
11. MESI25_6: Call for support of scientific research activities 2025 (209 decisions on co-financing)
12. MESI25_7: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2025–2026 (20 contracts on co-financing)
13. MESI25_8: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the People’s Republic of China for the period 2025–2026 (15 contracts on co-financing)
14. MESI25_9: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation of the Government of Montenegro and the Italian Council for National Research (CNR) for the period 2026–2027 (8 contracts on co-financing)
15. MESI25_10: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Republic of Slovakia (10 contracts on co-financing)
16. MESI25_11: Call for joint projects for multilateral scientific and technological cooperation in the Danube region for the period 2025–2027 (3 contracts on co-financing)
17. MESI25_12: Call for excellence scholarships for doctoral research in Montenegro 2025 (25 contracts on financing)



18. MESI25_14: Public call for financing NGO projects and programmes in the field of social innovation (4 projects contracted)

Calls of the Innovation Fund in 2024:

1. IF24_1: Collaborative Innovation Grants Programme 2024 (6 projects contracted)
2. IF24_2: Early-Stage Start-up Development Programme 2024 (12 projects contracted)
3. IF24_3: Proof of Innovative Concept Programme 2024 (11 projects contracted)
4. IF24_4: Program for Encouraging Innovation in Energy Efficiency in Industry 2024 (14 projects contracted)

Calls of the Innovation Fund in 2025:

5. IF25_1: Call for grants to strengthen the innovativeness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises 2025 (14 projects contracted)
6. IF25_2: Early-Stage Start-up Development Support Programme 2025 (12 projects contracted)
7. IF25_3: Proof of Innovative Concept Programme 2025 (19 projects contracted)
8. IF25_4: Innovation Vouchers Programme 2025 (14 projects contracted)
9. IF25_5: Programme for the implementation of educational programmes in the areas of Montenegro's smart specialisation 2025 (28 projects contracted)
10. IF25_6: Call for fostering innovation culture 2025 (21 project contracted)

For an easier reference and monitoring of the implementation of competitions/calls, each competition/call has been assigned a code. Further text in the *Appendix I* contains the overview of the implementation of the competitions/calls of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation in 2024 and 2025, while the *Appendix II* contains the overview of the implementation of the competitions/calls of the Innovation Fund in 2024 and 2025.

MINISTER



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Appendix 1

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW – Competitions/calls of the MESI in 2024 and 2025

1. MESI24_1: Call for co-financing scientific research activities 2024

Under this Call 51 decision on financing was adopted.

The Call for co-financing of scientific research activities in 2024 was published on 14.02.2024, with a submission deadline of 2 December 2024, on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/raspisan-konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-nid-u-2024-godini>. The subject and aim of the Call were to strengthen the scientific research capacities of Montenegro, both individual and institutional, through 11 support measures (call lines) based on different eligibility grounds. The total amount of funds allocated for all 11 lines of the Call was €420,000.00, while the total amount of funds awarded was €99,217.48. An overview by individual lines is provided below.

LINE 1 – Improvement of infrastructure for scientific research work – procurement of equipment, tools, and consumables

The allocated amount was €120,000.00, and €14,507.62 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 3 (legal entities – scientific research institutions). Gender distribution among beneficiaries: 1 female researcher and 2 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2024 to 2.12.2024.

LINE 2 – Participation in the EU Research and Innovation Programme Horizon Europe

The allocated amount was €30,000.00, and €8,124.69 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 4: 2 individual researchers and 2 legal entities (1 company and 1 local self-government unit).

LINE 3 – Participation in the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme

There was no interest in this line of the Call; therefore, the funds allocated for this line remained entirely unused.

LINE 4 – Participation in ICGEB and EMBL/EMBO activities

There was no interest in this line of the Call; therefore, the funds allocated for this line remained entirely unused.

LINE 5 – Short-term scientific mobility

The allocated amount was €50,000.00, and €3,103.70 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 3 (individual researchers). Gender distribution among beneficiaries: 2 female researchers and 1 male researcher. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2024 to 31.12.2024.



LINE 6 – Costs of completed doctoral studies

The allocated amount was €40,000, and €17,000 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 9 (individual researchers). Gender distribution among beneficiaries: 4 female researchers and 5 male researchers. The project implementation period was until 2.12.2024.

LINE 7 – Participation in scientific conferences

The allocated amount was €40,000.00, and €8,780.90 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 8: 6 individuals (researchers) and 2 legal entities (scientific research institutions). Gender distribution among beneficiaries: 4 female researchers and 4 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2024 to 2.12.2024.

LINE 8 – Publishing in open-access journals

The allocated amount was €40,000.00, and €15,225.13 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 13 legal entities: 11 scientific research institutions, 1 company, and 1 public institution (school). Gender distribution among beneficiaries: 5 female researchers and 8 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2024 to 2.12.2024.

LINE 9 – Editing/publishing scientific journals

The allocated amount was €20,000.00, and €17,222.00 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 7 legal entities (3 scientific research institutions, 1 company, and 3 NGOs). Gender distribution among beneficiaries: 1 female researcher and 6 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2024 to 2.12.2024.

LINE 10 – Organization of scientific conferences

The allocated amount was €40,000.00, and €15,253.44 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. The number of beneficiaries was 4 legal entities (1 scientific research institution and 3 NGOs). Gender distribution among beneficiaries: 1 female researcher and 3 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2024. to 2.12.2024.

LINE 11 – Promotion of science and research

This line of the Call was implemented before 1.09.2024.

2. MESI24_2: Call for supporting participation in the EUREKA programme in 2024

Under this Call 4 contracts on co-financing were signed.

The Call for supporting participation in the EUREKA programme in 2024 was published on 14.02.2024. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-ucesca-u-eureka-projekta-u-2024-godini>. The subject of the Call was the co-financing of collaborative projects between scientific research institutions



and enterprises from Montenegro, related to the participation of these institutions/enterprises as coordinators or partners in EUREKA Network projects. The aim of the Call was to encourage small and medium-sized enterprises and scientific research institutions to cooperate with international partners in launching research and development and innovative activities, as well as to invest in research and development in order to strengthen their innovation capacity.

The Call was implemented through two programme lines:

- I. Programme line for co-financing participation in Network EUREKA projects in 2024, with the application submission deadline of 1.11.2024; and
- II. Multilateral EUREKA Call for the Western Balkans in 2024, with the application submission deadline of 15.05.2024.

The total value of the Call amounted to €190,000.00 (Programme Line I: €90,000.00 and Programme Line II: €100,000.00). Project applications were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the criteria for appointing experts and the procedure for evaluating innovation programmes and projects (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 107/21) and the EUREKA Network project evaluation methodology, by independent evaluators from the List of Independent Experts maintained by the MESI in accordance with the aforementioned Rulebook. Within the Call, funding was awarded to 4 EUREKA projects, i.e. contracts were signed with beneficiaries in the amount of €160,000.00 for the first research year (the total potential value of the approved projects is €480,000.00). All 4 beneficiaries that received funding are legal entities: 3 scientific research institutions and 1 company. The number of women among project leaders is 1, and men 3. The duration of all 4 projects is 3 years each. Co-financing by beneficiaries is not mandatory for EUREKA projects in Montenegro. Out of the 4 projects mentioned, 1 includes co-financing by the Montenegrin partner (beneficiary). Financing of the second and third research years of EUREKA projects is carried out on the basis of annual work reports submitted by beneficiaries to the MPNI, which are subject to international evaluation.

3. MESI24_3: Public call for the award of annual prizes for scientific achievements 2024

Under this Call one decision was adopted to award the funds to 4 beneficiaries.

The Public call for the award of annual prizes for scientific achievements 2024 was published on 21.11.2024. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/javni-poziv-za-dodjelu-nagrada-za-naucna-dostignuca-u-2024-godini>, with the deadline for submission of applications set for 11.12.2024.

The subject of the Call was the awarding of prizes for scientific achievements in 2024 to Montenegrin citizens who, in 2024, achieved outstanding results in scientific research work or in one of the innovative programmes in Montenegro or abroad, or who protected their invention/innovation by a patent in Montenegro or abroad, within the following three categories:

- Most successful scientist – €3,000.00;
- Most successful young scientist (up to 30 years of age) – €2,000.00; and
- Inventor-innovator or a group of inventors-innovators for the most successful patent-protected invention or the most successful innovation – €3,000.00.



The aim of the Call was to stimulate the scientific research and innovation community to engage in these activities through forms of rewards and recognition. In accordance with the Rulebook on the Conditions and Detailed Criteria for the Awarding of Prizes for Scientific Achievements, as well as the Amounts of the Prizes (Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 124/22), the Commission for the evaluation of applications under the Public call for the award of annual prizes for scientific achievements 2024 was responsible for proposing candidates for the prizes.

The total amount of awarded prizes was €11,000.00, and four scientists were supported, namely 2 women and 2 men, through the awarding of:

- prizes for the most successful scientist – 2 awardees;
- the prize for the most successful young scientist – 1 awardee; and
- the prize for the inventor–innovator or a group of inventors–innovators for the most successful patent-protected invention or the most successful innovation – 1 awardee.

4. MESI24_4: Call for the award of excellence scholarships for doctoral research in Montenegro 2024

Under this Call 30 scholarships were awarded.

The Call for the award of excellence scholarships for doctoral research in Montenegro 2024 was published on 2.10.2024. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-dodjelu-stipendija-izvrsnosti-za-doktorska-istrazivanja-u-crnoj-gori>, with the application submission deadline set for 31.10.2024.

The subject of the Call was the allocation of non-refundable funds in the form of scholarships for doctoral research projects of excellent doctoral students, i.e. PhD candidates, at universities in Montenegro. The objectives of the Call were to: strengthen human resources for research and innovation; expand the researcher base in Montenegro; retain and attract young people in Montenegro; promote knowledge exchange between the academic and business sectors; enhance the competitiveness of the academic and business sectors; and foster the internationalization of scientific research activities.

Through this programme, doctoral students were expected to achieve significant research results, engage in intense cooperation with the research team—primarily with their supervisor—strengthen the research team's links with international partners or partners from the business sector through mobility, and build capacities enabling them to contribute to the development of research activities in specific fields in Montenegro, as well as to prepare and participate in project proposals for EU research and innovation funds.

The total budget allocated under the Call amounted to €1,500,000.00. The evaluation was carried out by international evaluators in accordance with the Law on Scientific Research Activity (*Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No. 51/25). Scholarships were awarded to 30 doctoral candidates, out of which 19 women and 11 men. Projects were contracted for durations of 12, 24, or 36 months. The value of individual projects depended on their duration and amounted to a maximum of approximately €50,000.00.



5. MESI24_5: Research Grants Programme for fostering excellence 2024

Under the 2024 Call based on this programme 6 grants were contracted.

The Call for applications for the awarding of research grants to foster excellence was published on 16.10.2024. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-dodjelu-istrazivackih-grantova-za-podsticanje-izvrsnosti>, with the deadline for the submission of applications set for 17.12.2024.

The subject of the Call was the allocation of non-refundable funds in the form of grants aimed at promoting excellent research, interdisciplinarity, networking at the national and international levels, and cooperation with the business sector. The objectives of the Call were to strengthen the capacities of scientific research institutions and teams in Montenegro in order to build high-quality and sustainable partnerships at the national and international levels and to foster excellence, thereby contributing to the development of a knowledge-based society and enhancing the international competitiveness of Montenegrin science. An additional objective of the Call was to contribute to the creation of knowledge with commercial potential, with the aim of strengthening economic competitiveness through knowledge transfer from the scientific research sector.

The total amount of funds allocated under the Call was €2,100,000.00. The evaluation was carried out by international evaluators in accordance with the Law on Scientific Research Activity (*Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No. 51/25). Grant agreements were signed with 6 beneficiaries, including 2 women and 4 men (project managers). Projects were contracted for durations of 36 or 48 months. The amount of the Ministry's grant ranged from €300,000.00 to €350,000.00 per project.

6. MESI25_1: Call for projects of cooperation with the scientific diaspora 2025

Under this Call 10 projects were contracted.

The Call for projects of cooperation with the scientific diaspora 2025 was published on 2.10.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-projekata-saradnje-sa-naucnom-dijasporom>, with the application deadline set for 17.11.2025.

The subject of the Call was the allocation of non-repayable funds in the form of grants to support excellent collaborative projects between licensed research institutions in Montenegro, the scientific diaspora, their affiliated institutions abroad, as well as other international and domestic partners. The aim of the Call was to enable the effective transfer of knowledge, methodologies, technologies, and innovations into Montenegro's research and innovation community, while strengthening international cooperation and connecting Montenegrin scientists and innovators with global science and innovation networks. In the long term, the objectives of the Programme, expected to be achieved five years after the completion of the projects, are as follows: strengthening the capacities of licensed research institutions to conduct top-level research through the transfer of knowledge, methodologies, and technologies from prestigious institutions abroad; supporting the career development of young researchers; enhancing international cooperation by increasing the number of joint research projects and improving the visibility of Montenegrin research institutions; creating high-quality projects ready for further development and commercialization; and improving capacities for the absorption of funds from EU programmes.



The total amount of allocated funding was €1,100,000.00. The evaluation was conducted by international evaluators in accordance with the Law on Scientific Research Activity (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 51/25). Grant agreements were signed with 10 legal entities (research institutions), with 3 women and 7 men among the project leaders. The contracted projects have a duration of 24 months (two research years). The value of individual projects ranges from €90,000.00 to €120,000.00, while co-financing provided by the Ministry amounts to up to 90% of the total project value (up to a maximum of €120,000.00). Applicants are required to secure at least 10% of the total project value as co-financing, from their own funds, partner institutions' funds, or external financing sources. In the first research year, the Ministry will disburse a total of €617,413.62.

7. MESI25_2: Call for postdoctoral research 2025

Under this Call 7 contracts on financing were signed.

The Call for financing postdoctoral research for excellence was published on 24.10.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-finansiranje-postdoktorskih-istrazivanja-za-izvrsnost>, with the application deadline set for 18.11.2025.

The subject of the Call was the allocation of non-repayable funds to postdoctoral researchers for the development of independent research projects, as well as for the establishment and leadership of their own research groups at institutions in Montenegro. The aim of the Call was to provide researchers who are within up to seven (7) years of obtaining their PhD with an opportunity to develop research skills, build international connections, enhance professional competencies, and achieve top-level scientific results. The results expected immediately after the completion of the projects include: an increased number of independent excellent researchers; strengthened research and management skills of postdoctoral researchers; an increased number of excellent research groups; increased international mobility and cooperation with leading research groups abroad; and enhanced cooperation activities with industry. The specific objectives of the Call, expected to be achieved five years after continuous implementation, include: the creation of a new generation of independent excellent researchers; strengthening human resources in research and innovation and improving the international recognition of research groups; an increased number of projects and scientific publications carried out in cooperation with leading research groups abroad; and an increased number of projects ready for further commercialization.

The total allocated budget amounted to €1,100,000.00. The evaluation was conducted by international evaluators in accordance with the Law on Scientific Research Activity (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 51/25). Grant agreements were signed with 7 beneficiaries (legal entities – research institutions), of whom 3 were women and 4 were men (project leaders). It is important to note that the final beneficiaries are the project leaders themselves – researchers. The contracted projects have a duration of 24 to 36 months. The value of an individual project is €70,000.00 for a 24-month period and up to €100,000.00 for a 36-month period.



8. MESI25_3: Call for supporting participation in the Horizon Europe programme 2025

Under this Call 52 decisions/contracts on financing were signed.

The Call for supporting participation in the Horizon Europe programme 2025 was published on 4.4.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/6929486e-5fb5-45c4-bceb-bebfa6cfee1>. The subject of the Call was the co-financing of activities related to the preparation of project proposals for Horizon Europe calls, networking and cooperation activities, and the implementation of training activities. The aim of the Call was to increase the participation of organizations from Montenegro in the Horizon Europe programme. The Call was implemented through six items:

1. Expert support in the process of preparing project proposals, with the application deadline set for 5.12.2025;
2. Participation in networking events, with the application deadline set for 5.12.2025;
3. Awards for institutions acting as coordinators of positively evaluated Horizon Europe project proposals that were not selected for funding, with the application deadline set for 5.12.2025;
4. Participation of delegates in Programme Committees and national contact persons in meetings of European Commission bodies for the Horizon Europe programme, with the application deadline set for 5.12.2025;
5. Encouraging participation in Pillar III – Innovative Europe, with the application deadline set for 5.12.2025;
6. Implementation of training activities within the Horizon Europe programme, with the application deadline set for 31.08.2025.

The total value of the Call amounted to €160,000.00. Project proposals were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Criteria for the Appointment of Experts and the Procedure for the Evaluation of Innovation Programmes and Projects (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 107/21). Within the framework of the Call, 52 applications were approved, and the total amount of funds disbursed was €98,807.95. Of the total number of approved applications, 45 were submitted by individuals. Among individual applicants, 15 were women and 22 were men. The remaining 7 applications were approved for legal entities, namely companies, among which there were 3 female project managers and 4 male project managers.

9. MESI25_4: Public call “Science at Hand” for financing NGO projects and programmes in the field of science

Under this Call 6 projects were contracted.

The Public Call “Science at Hand” for the financing of NGO projects and programmes in the field of science was published on 20.05.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/javni-konkurs-nauku-pod-ruku-za-finansiranje-projekata-i-programma-nvo-u-oblasti-nauke>, with the application deadline set for 16.05.2025.

The subject of the Call relates to the strategic objectives to which NGO projects and programmes in 2025 would contribute, namely the development of human resources and research capacities, and the



strengthening of human resources in the field of research and innovation. The priority challenges in the field of science to be addressed through the financing of NGO projects and programmes include: insufficient recognition of the research profession and science in society; low interest among pupils in enrolling in natural science faculties; and the lag of traditional education models behind contemporary trends imposed by the information age. The needs of the target groups have been identified in terms of: increasing the visibility of science and its importance for society; raising the level of interest among young talents in choosing a research career – primary and secondary school pupils, as well as students interested in engaging in research; and acquiring new knowledge and experience on opportunities for strengthening the research capacities of young researchers through the promotion of science.

The total allocated budget amounted to €100,000.00, of which €99,998.20 was awarded. The evaluation was carried out by independent assessors in accordance with the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations. A total of 6 projects were contracted with legal entities (non-governmental organizations), with 2 women and 4 men among the project leaders. The duration of the projects is up to 12 months, and the value of an individual project is up to €16,800.00.

10. MESI25_5: Call for support for science promotion projects and innovative programmes within the “Days of Science and Innovation 2025” festival

Under this Call 15 projects were contracted.

The Call for support for science promotion projects and innovative programmes within the “Days of Science and Innovation 2025” festival was published on 9.06.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/otvoren-konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-projekata-promocije-nauke-i-inovacija-u-okviru-festivala-nauke-i-inovacija-2025>, with the application deadline set for 30.06.2025.

The subject of the Call was the co-financing of projects to be implemented within the 13th edition of the Days of Science and Innovation 2025 Festival, with the aim of promoting science, innovation, and research through interactive and educational content intended for various target groups. The objectives of the Call were to foster young people's interest in science and innovation; to popularize scientific research and innovation activities among the wider public; and to present the achievements of Montenegrin scientists, innovators, and researchers. The Call was implemented through the content corresponding to the following concept:

1. Central EXPO exhibition, within two segments (1.1. “Innovations and Technologies for the Future” and 1.2. “Science as a Driver of Innovation”, with a total value of €40,000.00); and
2. Open Lab Days: “Touch Science” (with a total value of €10,000.00).

The Commission established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation for Segment 1, Item 1.1 carried out the evaluation of applications within that segment in accordance with the Rulebook on the Criteria for the Appointment of Independent Experts and the Procedure for the Evaluation of Innovation Programmes and Projects (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 100/21). The Commission established for Segment 1, Item 1.2 evaluated applications in accordance with Article 11 of the Law on Scientific Research Activity (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 51/25). The Commission established for Segment 2 conducted the evaluation of applications in accordance with Article 11 of the same Law. A total of 15 contracts were concluded with the beneficiaries, with a total contracted value of €28,000.00, all with legal



entities (4 companies, 10 non-governmental organizations, and 1 research institution). The value of individual projects ranged from €1,000.00 for Segment 2 to €2,500.00 for Segment 1. Among the project coordinators, there were 4 women and 11 men. The projects were implemented over the course of two festival days, 24–25.09.2025.

11. MESI25_6: Call for support of scientific research activities 2025

Under this Call 209 decisions on financing were signed.

The Call for support to scientific research activities in 2025 was published on 14.02.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-naucnoistrazivacke-djelatnosti-u-2025-godini>, with the application deadline set for 5.12.2025. The subject and aim of the Call were to strengthen Montenegro's scientific research capacities, both at the individual and institutional levels, through 8 support measures (call lines) based on different eligibility grounds. The total budget allocated for all 8 measures amounted to €470,000.00, while the total amount of funds awarded was €441,148.14. An overview by individual lines is provided below.

LINE 1 – Improvement of infrastructure for scientific research work – procurement of equipment, tools, and consumables

The allocated budget amounted to €130,000.00, of which €123,996.97 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 29 legal entities (research institutions) received funding. Among the beneficiaries, there were 12 female researchers and 17 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2025. to 5.12.2025.

LINE 2 – Short-term scientific mobility

The allocated budget amounted to €80,000.00, of which €52,945.11 was awarded: €41,535.91 for early-stage researchers and €11,409.20 for experienced researchers. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 31 individual beneficiaries received funding (25 early-stage researchers and 6 experienced researchers). Among the beneficiaries, there were 14 female researchers and 17 male researchers (early-stage researchers: 12 women and 13 men; experienced researchers: 2 women and 4 men). The project implementation period was from 14.02.2025. to 31.12.2025.

LINE 3 – Costs of completed doctoral studies

The allocated budget amounted to €35,000.00, while €48,131.91 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 21 individual beneficiaries (researchers) received funding, of whom 6 were women and 15 were men. The project implementation period was until 5.12.2025.

In line with the priorities of strengthening human resources in science and research, as well as reinforcing open access policy activities, the Call stipulated that, after the application deadline of 5.12.2025., and in case that some funds remained unused under certain lines, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation could, by a special decision, reallocate funds to Line 3 – Costs of completed doctoral studies and Line 5 – Publication of scientific papers in open-access journals. Following the application deadline, it was determined that additional 6 candidates had applied under Line 3 after the originally allocated funds



had been exhausted. Consequently, additional funds were secured from another line of the Call under which unused funds remained at the time of closing of the Call.

LINE 4 – Participation in scientific conferences

The allocated budget amounted to €70,000.00, and the full amount of €70,000.00 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 71 beneficiaries received funding (65 individual researchers and 6 legal entities: 5 research institutions and 1 company). Among the beneficiaries, there were 38 female researchers and 33 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2025. to 5.12.2025., while this line was closed on 24.09.2025. due to the full allocation of the funds available for co-financing.

LINE 5 – Publication of scientific papers in open-access journals

The allocated budget amounted to €45,000.00, while €45,205.15 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 29 beneficiaries received funding (22 individual researchers and 7 legal entities – research institutions). Among the beneficiaries, there were 19 female researchers and 10 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2025. to 5.12.2025.

LINE 6 – Editing/publishing scientific journals

The allocated budget amounted to €30,000.00, and the full amount of €30,000.00 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 10 legal entities received funding (3 research institutions, 1 company, 5 NGOs, and 1 non-profit institution). Among the beneficiaries, there were 5 female researchers and 5 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2025. to 5.12.2025.

LINE 7 – Organization of scientific conferences

The allocated budget amounted to €50,000.00, and the full amount of €50,000.00 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 11 legal entities received funding (2 research institutions, 1 public institution – school, and 8 NGOs). Among the beneficiaries, there were 3 female researchers and 8 male researchers. The project implementation period was from 14.02.2025. to 5.12.2025., while this measure was closed on 31.10.2025. due to the full allocation of the funds available for co-financing.

LINE 8 – Promotion of science and research

The allocated budget amounted to €30,000.00, while €20,870.00 was awarded. Funds were granted following an administrative review, based on verification of compliance with the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Call. A total of 7 legal entities received funding (3 research institutions, 2 NGOs, and 2 public institutions).

12. MESI25_7: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2025–2026

Under this Call 20 bilateral projects were contracted.

The Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2025–2026 was published on 8.03.2024. on the website of the Ministry of



Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-naucne-i-tehnoloske-saradnje-crna-gora-slovenija-2025-26godine>, with the application deadline set for 10.05.2024. The subject of the Call was the co-financing of mutual visits of researchers from Montenegro and the Republic of Slovenia (travel and subsistence costs), aimed at the implementation of joint research projects to be carried out during the period 2025–2026. The objective of the Call was to strengthen bilateral scientific research cooperation with the Republic of Slovenia, increase researcher mobility, encourage the exchange of early-career researchers through longer research stays in the partner country, and increase the number of joint applications to European and other international research and innovation programmes.

The total amount of co-financing provided by MESI amounted to € 2,000.00 per project. The Slovenian side provided an equivalent amount for its researchers, as well as additional funds for longer-term stays of early-career researchers from Montenegro in Slovenia. In accordance with bilateral rules, the receiving side covers accommodation and daily allowances, whereas the sending side covers the costs of international travel between the collaborating institutions. Project proposals underwent an independent evaluation process in both countries. In Montenegro, an international external evaluation was conducted through the engagement of experts from relevant fields. Based on evaluation scores, ranking lists, jointly agreed priorities, and in line with the Call conditions and available budget, the Joint Commission for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, composed of representatives of MESI and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Slovenia, approved a total of 20 projects for funding. Contracts were signed with the beneficiaries of the approved projects, with a total value of € 40,000.00 allocated by the Montenegrin side. All beneficiaries are legal entities, namely licensed research institutions, with the majority of approved projects (18) implemented by the faculties of the University of Montenegro. Among the project leaders, 14 are women and 6 are men. All approved projects have a duration of two years, with implementation starting on 1.01.2025. and concluding on 31.12.2026.

13. MESI25_8: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the People's Republic of China for the period 2025–2026

Under this Call 15 bilateral projects were contracted.

The Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the People's Republic of China for the period 2025–2026 was published on 30.08.2024. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-naucne-i-tehnoloske-saradnje-izmedu-crne-gore-i-nr-kine>, with the application deadline set for 30.09.2024. The subject of the Call was the co-financing of joint scientific research projects in research areas of mutual interest, implemented through the exchange of researchers from Montenegro and the People's Republic of China, with the aim of carrying out planned research activities. The objective of the Call was to enhance scientific research cooperation between the two countries, increase researcher mobility, encourage the exchange of early-career researchers, and strengthen capacities for joint participation in international research and innovation programmes.

The total amount of co-financing provided by the Montenegrin side was up to € 14,000.00 per project, covering the costs of researcher mobility (travel and subsistence), while the Chinese side provided an equivalent amount. The funds are intended for exchange activities necessary for the implementation of bilateral projects, in accordance with the rules of both countries and the defined mobility plans. Project proposals in both countries underwent an independent evaluation process. In Montenegro, an international



external evaluation was conducted through the engagement of experts from relevant scientific fields. Following the harmonisation of evaluation scores, priorities, and available funds, the Joint Commission for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, composed of representatives of MESI and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China, approved a total of 15 bilateral projects for funding. Contracts were signed with the beneficiaries of the approved projects, with a total value of € 210,000.00 allocated by the Montenegrin side. All beneficiaries are legal entities - licensed research institutions, namely the faculties of the University of Montenegro. Among the project leaders, 7 are women and 8 are men. The approved projects have a duration of two years, with implementation starting on 1.01.2025. and concluding on 31.12.2026.

14. MESI25_9: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation of the Government of Montenegro and the Italian Council for National Research (CNR) for the period 2026–2027

Under this Call 8 bilateral projects were contracted.

The Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation of the Government of Montenegro and the Italian Council for National Research (CNR) for the period 2026–2027 was published on 17.03.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-naucne-i-tehnoloske-saradnje-izmedu-mpni-i-cnr>, with the application deadline set for 12.06.2025. The Call was launched on the basis of the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between MESI and CNR, signed on 12.11.2024., as well as the Programme of Cooperation in the Field of Science, signed in March 2025. The subject of the Call was the co-financing of up to eight joint scientific research projects implemented in priority research areas of mutual interest, through the exchange of researchers from Montenegro and the Republic of Italy. The objective of the Call was to encourage and strengthen cooperation between scientific teams of the two countries through mobility activities enabling the implementation of joint research activities, with the aim of enhancing institutional and research links with CNR, increasing the international visibility of Montenegrin institutions, and strengthening participation in joint European and international research initiatives.

The total amount of co-financing provided by the Montenegrin side was up to € 10,000.00 per project, covering costs related to researcher exchange, while the Italian side provided an equivalent amount for its research team. The funding applies to researcher visits in both countries, in accordance with the activities defined in the approved projects. Project proposals underwent an independent evaluation process in both countries. In Montenegro, an international external evaluation was conducted through the engagement of experts from relevant scientific fields. Following the harmonisation of evaluation results, established priorities, and the available budget, the Joint Commission for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, composed of representatives of MESI and the National Research Council of Italy, approved a total of 8 bilateral projects for funding. Contracts were concluded with the beneficiaries of the approved projects, with a total value of € 78,000.00 provided by the Montenegrin side. The beneficiaries are legal entities – licensed research institutions, namely the faculties of the University of Montenegro and the University of Donja Gorica. It is particularly noteworthy that all approved projects are led by women, with a total of 8 female project leaders. All projects have a duration of two years, with implementation starting on 1.01.2026. and planned to conclude on 31.12.2027.



15. MESI25_10: Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Republic of Slovakia

Under this Call 10 bilateral projects were contracted.

The Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Republic of Slovakia was published on 12.05.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-naucne-i-tehnoloske-saradnje-izmedu-cg-i-republike-slovacke>, with the application deadline set for 16.07.2025. The subject of the Call was the co-financing of bilateral scientific research projects implemented with the participation of researchers from Montenegro and the Slovak Republic, through mutual visits and joint research activities across all fields of science and development. The objective of the Call was to encourage new and strengthen existing scientific research links, enhance cooperation through joint international project initiatives, support the preparation of scientific publications and the organisation of joint scientific events, and facilitate the inclusion of early-career researchers in international research networks.

The Call enabled the submission of up to ten bilateral project proposals, with the obligation for both teams to jointly plan and implement researcher mobility activities. The Montenegrin side provided co-financing of up to € 8,000.00 per project, intended to cover researcher mobility costs (travel and subsistence), with the possibility of allocating part of the funds to cover material costs. The Slovak side provided an equivalent amount for its research team. The funds are intended for activities directly related to the achievement of joint research objectives and researcher visits in both countries. Project proposals underwent an independent evaluation process in both countries. In Montenegro, an international external evaluation was conducted through the engagement of experts from relevant scientific fields. Following the harmonisation of evaluation results, the available budget, and cooperation priorities, the Joint Commission for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, composed of representatives of MESI and the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic, approved a total of 10 bilateral projects for funding. Contracts were concluded with the beneficiaries of the approved projects. The total value of funding provided by the Montenegrin side amounts to € 80,000.00. The beneficiaries are legal entities – licensed research institutions. Among the project leaders, 3 are women and 7 are men. All projects have a duration of two years, with implementation starting on 1.01.2026. and planned to conclude on 31.12.2027.

16. MESI25_11: Call for joint projects for multilateral scientific and technological cooperation in the Danube region for the period 2025–2027

Under this Call 3 projects were contracted.

The Call for joint projects for multilateral scientific and technological cooperation in the Danube region for the period 2025–2027 was published on 11.11.2024. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/cetvrti-poziv-za-podnosenje-zajednickih-prijedloga-projekata-saradnje-u-dunavskom-regionu>, with the application deadline set for January 17.01.2025. The subject of the Call is the co-financing of joint research projects implemented in partnership by research teams from at least three participating countries of the Programme (Republic of Austria, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia, Czech Republic, Republic of France, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, and Slovak Republic). Project activities are based on researcher mobility and joint work on clearly defined research objectives. The objective of the Call is to strengthen scientific potential in the participating



countries through international researcher exchange, enhancement of research capacities, and the promotion of more intensive cross-border cooperation. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of early-career researchers, the creation of conditions for international visibility and networking, and the encouragement of joint participation in European research programmes. The funding model is based on the principle that each participating country provides financial resources for the mobility of its own researchers.

On the Montenegrin side, the amount of co-financing depends on the number of partner countries involved in the project: up to € 7,000.00 for projects involving three participating countries, up to € 8,500.00 for projects involving four countries, and up to € 10,000.00 for projects involving five or more countries. The funds are intended to cover the travel and subsistence costs of Montenegrin researchers in partner countries. Institutions from other participating countries provide funding in accordance with their respective national rules. All project proposals underwent an independent evaluation process in the participating countries, with evaluations for the same projects conducted in parallel in all partner countries. In Montenegro, the evaluation was carried out by international experts from relevant scientific fields, applying predefined criteria. Following the completion of national evaluations, the harmonisation of results, and the assessment of the available budget, the Joint Commission for Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Danube Region, composed of representatives of the competent institutions of all participating countries, approved for financing a total of 3 multilateral projects involving partners from Montenegro. Contracts were concluded with the beneficiaries of the approved projects. The total value of financing provided by the Montenegrin side amounts to € 23,600.00, and the beneficiaries are legal entities – licensed research institutions. Among the project leaders, 1 is a woman and 2 are men. All projects have a duration of two years, with implementation starting on 1.07.2025. and planned to conclude on 30.06.2027.

17. MESI25_12: Call for excellence scholarships for doctoral research in Montenegro 2025

Under this Call 25 scholarships were awarded.

The Call for excellence scholarships for doctoral research in Montenegro 2025 was published on 31.10.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-dodjelu-stipendija-izvrsnosti-za-doktorska-istrazivanja-u-crnoj-gori-3>, with the application deadline set for 25.11.2025.

The subject of the Call was the allocation of non-repayable funds in the form of scholarships for doctoral research projects of excellent doctoral students, i.e. PhD candidates enrolled at universities in Montenegro. The objectives of the Call were: strengthening human resources for research and innovation; expanding the researcher base in Montenegro; retaining and attracting young people in Montenegro; fostering knowledge exchange between the academic and business sectors; enhancing the competitiveness of the academic and business sectors; and internationalizing scientific research activities. It was expected that doctoral students supported through this Call would achieve significant research results, engage in intensive collaboration with their research teams, strengthen links between research teams and international partners or industry partners through mobility, and build capacities enabling them to contribute to the development of research in specific fields in Montenegro, as well as to prepare and participate in project proposals for EU research and innovation funds.

The total allocated budget amounted to €1,000,000.00 for the period 2025–2028, with €400,000.00 planned for 2025. The evaluation was carried out by international evaluators in accordance with the Law on Scientific Research Activity (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 51/25). Grant agreements were signed



with 25 legal entities (research institutions), of which 12 were women and 13 were men (project leaders). The contracted projects have durations of 12, 24, or 36 months. With regard to the value of individual scholarships, the scholarship for doctoral research projects of excellent doctoral students in Montenegro covers the following categories of eligible costs: 1) monthly salary costs for the doctoral student, who is employed at a Montenegrin university under this Call, in an amount of up to €1,000.00 net per month; and 2) research costs in a gross amount of up to €15,000.00 per year.

18. MESI25_13: Public call for financing NGO projects and programmes in the field of social innovation

Under this Call 4 projects were contracted.

The Public call for financing NGO projects and programmes in the field of social innovation was published on 19.05.2025. on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI): <https://www.gov.me/clanak/javni-konkurs-za-finansiranje-projekata-i-programa-nvo-u-oblasti-drustvenih-inovacija>, with the application deadline set for 19.06.2025. The subject of the Public call was the financing of projects and programmes of non-governmental organizations in the field of social innovation that contribute to the development and strengthening of social entrepreneurship among young people, the improvement of social inclusion, the promotion of sustainable development, and the application of innovative solutions to enhance the quality of life in Montenegro, in accordance with the Law on Innovation Activity and the established public-interest priorities for 2025. The objective of the Call was to support the development and implementation of social innovations through projects and programmes of non-governmental organizations, with a particular focus on: strengthening youth social entrepreneurship; empowering young innovators and entrepreneurs through education, mentoring, and practical support; increasing social inclusion and sustainable socio-economic development; enhancing the innovative capacities of young people; and raising the visibility of social innovation as a tool for addressing societal challenges in Montenegro. The application deadline was 19.06.2025. The Call allocated €60,818.00, and the same amount was awarded. A national evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations. Funding was awarded to 4 beneficiaries (NGOs). Among the beneficiaries, there were 2 men and 2 women. The duration of the projects is up to 12 months.

MINISTER

Andela Jakšić-Stojanović

prof. Andela Jakšić Stojanović, PhD



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Appendix 2

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW – Calls of the Innovation Fund in 2024 and 2025

1. IF24_1: Collaborative Innovation Grants Programme (2024)

Under this programme line 6 projects were contracted.

The Public Call for this Programme <https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Javni-poziv-za-dodjelu-kolaborativnih-grantova-za-inovacije.pdf> was launched on 29.05.2024., with the application deadline set for 2.09.2024. The subject of the Collaborative Innovation Grants Programme was the allocation of non-repayable funds to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) implementing research and development projects aimed at developing new products, services, technologies, or processes in cooperation with “research and knowledge dissemination organizations.” The main objective of the Programme was to encourage micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to engage in active and meaningful cooperation with research and knowledge dissemination organizations or research organizations. Project funds could be used to co-finance stages of technological development between TRL 2 and TRL 8 on the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale. Projects were required to be linked to research and development activities and to start with the industrial research phase, which includes planned research or critical investigation aimed at acquiring new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes, or services, or for achieving significant improvements in existing products, processes, or services (from TRL 2 or TRL 3).

The total value of the Call amounted to €1,000,000.00, while the value of individual grants ranged from €50,000.00 to €200,000.00, with a support intensity of up to 80% of eligible costs.

Project proposals were evaluated in two stages in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>). The evaluation of projects was carried out by independent international experts from the Evaluators' Register maintained by the Fund in accordance with the Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Electronic Register of Evaluators and the Registration Procedure (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pravilnik-o-obliku-i-sadrzaju-elektronskog-registra.pdf>).

A total of 32 applications were submitted under the Public Call, of which the Expert Commission recommended 6 projects for grant award. All 6 projects were contracted, with a total budget of €1,179,143.67, of which the total value of approved grants amounted to €941,111.61, while beneficiary co-financing totalled €238,032.06. Regarding the gender structure of project leaders, out of the total of 6 project managers, 1 was a woman, while the remaining 5 were men. The duration of the projects ranges from 12 to 36 months.

2. IF24_2: Early-Stage Start-up Development Programme (2024)

Under this programme line 12 projects were contracted.

The Public Call for this Programme https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/JAVNI-POZIV-ZA-PODRSKU-RANOJ-FAZI-RAZVOJA-STARTAPOVA_2025.pdf was launched on 29.05.2024., with the application deadline set for 8.07.2024. The Programme was designed to support promising teams aiming to validate their business ideas by confirming their proposed solutions and demonstrating the potential of their new product, service, process, or technology through the development of a first prototype or a Minimum Viable Product (MVP). The objective of the Programme is to strengthen the startup ecosystem in Montenegro by fostering the growth and development of existing startups and the creation of new startup companies. The Programme supports innovative startup projects that offer solutions with development potential. Through this financial support, startups are enabled to continue developing innovative solutions with high market growth potential or innovative solutions that contribute to addressing societal challenges across various fields, including priority areas of smart specialization. In addition, the Programme aims to improve business performance by strengthening the capacities and competitiveness of startups, bearing in mind that this programme line also includes mentorship support.

Project proposals were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>). The evaluation of projects was carried out by independent international experts from the Register of Evaluators maintained by the Fund in accordance with the Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Electronic Register of Evaluators and the Registration Procedure (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pravilnik-o-obliku-i-sadrzaju-elektronskog-registra.pdf>).

The allocated budget amounted to €350,000.00. The grant funding that the Fund may award is limited to a maximum of €30,000.00 per project and may cover up to 90% of the total project budget. In addition, all Programme beneficiaries receive an additional €5,000.00 earmarked for mentorship support. Mentorship services are paid by the beneficiary directly to the mentor from a dedicated budget line within the project budget.

Following the completion of the evaluation process, projects for 12 startup companies were approved, with a total amount of awarded funds of €388,573.14. Beneficiary co-financing amounted to €44,020.94. Of the total 12 project leaders, 9 were men and 3 were women. The duration of the projects ranges from 6 to 9 months.

3. IF24_3: Proof of Innovative Concept Programme (2024)

Under this programme line 11 projects were contracted.

The Public Call for this Programme <https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Javni-poziv.pdf> was launched on 25.07.2024., with the application deadline set for 30.09.2024. The Proof of Concept (PoC) Programme recognizes the need to support innovations at the earliest stages of research, in order to provide evidence that a new process or technology is feasible and has the potential for commercial application. The main objective of the Programme is to support early-stage research innovations by providing pre-commercial capital for the technical and commercial validation of an innovative concept, as well as to strengthen the capacities and capabilities of the private sector and research institutions in research,

development, and innovation. Through Proof of Concept support, the Programme aims to determine whether the proposed idea related to a new process or technology is feasible and market-oriented, thereby indicating the viability of further investment in the development of the proposed concept. Within this Programme, projects with a high technological risk are financed, i.e. projects for which it is not yet known whether the proposed solution can be developed and function as intended. The outcome of a PoC may be either positive or negative; accordingly, the Programme provides evidence on whether further investment in development is justified. Successful PoC projects will provide investors with confidence that the process is technically feasible and that the prototype functions effectively.

Project proposals were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>). The evaluation of projects was carried out by independent international experts from the Register of Evaluators maintained by the Fund, in line with the Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Electronic Register of Evaluators and the Registration Procedure (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pravilnik-o-obliku-i-sadrzaju-elektronskog-registra.pdf>).

The allocated budget amounted to €350,000.00, while the possible grant amount ranged from €20,000.00 to €40,000.00 per project. Following the completion of the evaluation process, a total of 11 projects were approved – 5 implemented by companies and 6 by research institutions, with a total amount of awarded funds of €371,428.82. Beneficiary co-financing amounted to €97,134.32. The duration of the projects ranges from 4 to 12 months. From the perspective of gender balance among project leaders, of the 11 approved projects, 4 are led by women and 7 by men.

4. IF24_4: Program for Encouraging Innovation in Energy Efficiency in Industry 2024

Under this programme 14 projects were contracted in 2024.

The Public Call for this Programme [Javni poziv](#) was opened on 1.10.2024., with the application deadline set for 11.11.2024. The main objective of the Programme for Encouraging Innovation in Energy Efficiency in Industry is to increase energy efficiency and/or the increased use of available renewable energy sources by micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the manufacturing industry through the introduction of innovative technologies.

The specific objectives, i.e. the expected outcomes and impacts three years after the completion of project implementation, are as follows:

1. Improved business performance of MSMEs in the manufacturing industry through the introduction of digital solutions that contribute to enhanced energy management;
2. Improved energy management by MSMEs in the manufacturing industry; and
3. Strengthened capacities of MSME staff in the manufacturing industry for managing energy efficiency and/or using renewable/clean energy sources.

Project proposals were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>). The evaluation of projects was carried out by independent international experts from the Register of Evaluators maintained by the Fund, in line with the Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Electronic Register of Evaluators and the Registration Procedure (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pravilnik-o-obliku-i-sadrzaju-elektronskog-registra.pdf>).

The allocated budget amounted to €2,300,000.00, while the possible grant amount ranged from €50,000.00 to €200,000.00 per project. Following the completion of the evaluation process, a total of 14 projects submitted by enterprises were approved, with a total amount of awarded funds of €1,691,468.12. Beneficiary co-financing amounted to €822,669.20. The duration of the projects ranges from 6 to 24 months. From the perspective of the gender structure of project leaders, all 14 approved projects are led by men.

5. IF25_1: Call for grants to strengthen the innovativeness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises 2025

Under this Call 14 projects were contracted.

The Public Call for this Programme <https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/JAVNI-POZIV-ZA-JACANJE-INOVATIVNOSTI-NOVOOSNOVANIH-ILI-POSTOJECIH-MMSP -2025-1.pdf> was launched on 23.04.2025., with the application deadline set for 16.06.2025. (<https://fondzainovacije.me/2-4-miliona-eura-za-inovacije-otvoreno-sest-programa-podrske/>).

The subject of the Programme was to provide support to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), including startups at a more mature stage, that develop innovations for which there is a market demand. The objective of the Programme was to increase the innovativeness of MSMEs through the introduction of process innovations or the creation of new or improved market-oriented products, services, or technologies. The intention was to stimulate, through investment in pre-commercial activities, the development and improvement of products, services, and technologies that are new or significantly improved compared to those already available on the market, with the aim of commercialization and contributing to increased company revenues. In addition, the Programme also encourages the development of process innovations, i.e. the introduction of new or significantly improved ways of conducting business operations in the business environment, aimed at accelerating production processes, increasing production precision and quality, or significantly reducing production costs.

Project proposals were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>). The evaluation of projects was carried out by independent international experts from the Register of Evaluators maintained by the Fund, in line with the Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Electronic Register of Evaluators and the Registration Procedure (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pravilnik-o-obliku-i-sadrzaju-elektronskog-registra.pdf>).

The allocated budget amounted to €1,200,000.00, while the possible grant amount ranged from €50,000.00 to €200,000.00 per project. Following a two-stage evaluation process, projects submitted by 14 companies were approved, with a total amount of awarded funds of €2,435,454.15. Beneficiary co-financing amounted to €608,863.54. The additional funds required for contracting positively evaluated projects were secured by the Fund from the line for strengthening existing Fund programmes, financed through the Programme of Investments of Special Importance for the Economic and Business Interest of Montenegro. Of the total 14 project leaders, 13 were men and one was a woman. The duration of the projects ranges from 12 to 36 months.

6. IF25_2: Early-Stage Start-up Development Support Programme 2025

Under this Call 12 projects were contracted.

The public call for this Programme https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/JAVNI-POZIV-ZA-PODRSKU-RANOJ-FAZI-RAZVOJA-STARTAPOVA_2025.pdf was launched on 23.04.2025., with the deadline for submitting applications set for 3.06.2025. (<https://fondzainovacije.me/2-4-miliona-eura-za-inovacije-otvoreno-sest-programa-podrske/>).

The Programme is designed to support promising teams aiming to validate their business ideas by confirming their proposed solutions and demonstrating the potential of their new product, service, process, or technology through the development of a first prototype or a minimum viable product (MVP). The goal of the Programme is to strengthen the startup community in Montenegro by encouraging the growth and development of existing startups and the creation of new startup companies. The Programme supports innovative startup projects that offer solutions with development potential. Through this financial support, startups are enabled to continue developing innovative solutions with high market growth potential or innovative solutions that contribute to addressing social challenges in various fields, including priority areas of smart specialization. Another objective is to improve business operations by strengthening their capacities and competitiveness, bearing in mind that this program line also includes mentorship support.

Project applications were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>). The evaluation of projects was carried out by independent international experts from the Register of Evaluators maintained by the Fund, in line with the Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Electronic Register of Evaluators and the Registration Procedure (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pravilnik-o-obliku-i-sadrzaju-elektronskog-registra.pdf>).

The allocated budget amounted to €400,000.00, and the grant funding that the Fund may award to an applicant is limited to a maximum of €30,000.00 per project and may cover up to 90% of the total project budget. In addition, all Programme beneficiaries receive an additional €5,000.00 earmarked for mentorship support. Upon completion of the evaluation process, projects for 12 startup companies were approved, with the total amount of allocated funds reaching €390,789.40. Co-financing provided by the beneficiaries amounts to €39,817.72. Out of a total of 12 project managers, 9 are men and 3 are women. The project duration ranges from 6 to 9 months.

7. IF25_3: Proof of Innovative Concept Programme 2025

Under this Call 19 projects were contracted.

The public call for this Programme <https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Javni-poziv-Program-provjere-inovativnog-koncepta.pdf> was launched on 23.04.2025., with the deadline for submitting applications set for 16.06.2025. (<https://fondzainovacije.me/2-4-miliona-eura-za-inovacije-otvoreno-sest-programa-podrske/>).

The Proof of Concept (PoC) programme recognises the need to support innovations from the earliest stages of research, in order to provide evidence that a new process or technology is feasible and has the potential for commercial application. The main objective of the programme is to support innovations at an early stage

of research by ensuring pre-commercial capital for the technical and commercial validation of an innovative concept, as well as to strengthen the capacities and capabilities of the private sector and scientific research institutions in research, development, and innovation. The aim of the Proof of Concept support is to determine whether the proposed idea related to a new process or technology is feasible and market-oriented, thereby indicating the viability of further investment in the development of the proposed concept. Within this programme, projects characterised by high technological risk are funded, meaning those for which it is not yet known whether the proposed solution can be developed and function as intended. The outcome of a PoC can be either positive or negative; accordingly, this programme provides answers regarding the justification for further investment in development. Successful PoC projects provide investors with confidence that the process is technically feasible and that the prototype functions as intended.

Project applications were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>). The evaluation of projects was carried out by independent international experts from the Register of Evaluators maintained by the Fund, in line with the Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Electronic Register of Evaluators and the Registration Procedure (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pravilnik-o-obliku-i-sadrzaju-elektronskog-registra.pdf>).

The allocated budget amounted to €400,000.00, and the possible grant amount awarded by the Fund ranged from €20,000.00 to €40,000.00 per project. Upon completion of the evaluation process, a total of 19 projects were approved – 9 submitted by companies and 10 by scientific research institutions, with the total amount of allocated funds reaching €691,103.79. Co-financing provided by beneficiaries amounts to €179,431.34. For the 9 companies, the Fund allocated €322,759.67, while co-financing from the private sector amounts to €138,325.60. The missing funds required for contracting positively evaluated projects were secured by the Fund from the line for strengthening existing Fund programmes, financed through the Programme of Investments of Special Importance for the Economic and Business Interest of Montenegro. Out of a total of 19 project managers, 15 are men and 4 are women. Project duration ranges from 4 to 12 months.

8. IF25_4: Innovation Vouchers Programme 2025

Under this programme 14 projects were contracted.

The public call for this Programme <https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/JAVNI-POZIV-ZA-DODJELU-INOVACIONIH-VAUCERA-2025.pdf> was launched on 23.04.2025., and remained open until the available funds were exhausted, and no later than 19.12.2025. (<https://fondzainovacije.me/2-4-miliona-eura-za-inovacije-otvoreno-sest-programa-podrske/>).

The Innovation Voucher Programme is a simple, fast, and efficient financial incentive intended for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, with the aim of increasing the level of innovation of their products and improving their competitiveness on the market by using specialised services provided by scientific research institutions. The objective of the Innovation Voucher Programme is to financially encourage micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to collaborate with scientific and research institutions on the development of new or improved products, services, and processes, thereby strengthening their innovativeness and market competitiveness. The vouchers enable MSMEs to access expert knowledge, specialised equipment, and infrastructure, accelerate knowledge transfer, and more easily commercialise innovative solutions.

Project applications were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>).

The total value of the Call was €150,000.00, and the voucher funding that the Fund may award to an enterprise is limited to up to €10,000.00 and may cover 100% of eligible costs. Upon completion of the evaluation process, projects for 14 enterprises were approved, with the total amount of allocated funds reaching €123,442.58. There is no co-financing by beneficiaries, as voucher support covers 100% of the costs. Out of a total of 14 project managers, 9 are men and 5 are women. The project duration is up to 6 months.

9. IF25_5: Programme for the implementation of educational programmes in the areas of Montenegro's smart specialisation 2025

Under this programme 28 projects were contracted.

The public call for this Programme <https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Javni-poziv-%E2%80%93-Realizacija-edukativnih-programa-u-oblascima-pametne-specijalizacije-2025.pdf> was launched on 26.04.2025., with the deadline for submitting applications set for 26.05.2025. (<https://fondzainovacije.me/2-4-miliona-eura-za-inovacije-otvoreno-sest-programa-podrske/>).

The subject of the Programme is support for activities related to the implementation of intensive training programmes, lifelong learning, specialised upskilling programmes, and similar initiatives for pupils, students, young researchers, and professionals, with a particular focus on the smart specialisation areas of Montenegro. The objective of the programme is to ensure a continuous contribution to increasing Montenegro's competitiveness and to building an economy based on innovation and knowledge. The specific objectives of this Programme include engaging distinguished professionals, scientists, innovators, and/or entrepreneurs from Montenegro and abroad to design and organise structured training programmes lasting up to six months, with the aim of contributing to the enhancement of knowledge and skills of young people—pupils, students, young researchers, and professionals. The programmes should cover current and promising scientific and technological fields in which Montenegro needs to strengthen its human resources.

Project applications were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>).

The total value of the call was €150,000.00, and the funding that the Fund may award per project amounts to up to €10,000.00. Upon completion of the evaluation process, projects submitted by 28 legal entities were approved, including 9 companies, 5 scientific research institutions and other public institutions, and 14 non-governmental organisations, with the total amount of allocated funds reaching €269,658.96. Co-financing provided by beneficiaries amounts to €46,371.75. For 9 projects involving companies, €83,294.02 was allocated, while their co-financing amounts to €32,982.69. The missing funds required for contracting positively evaluated projects were secured by the Fund from the line for strengthening existing Fund programmes, financed through the Programme of Investments of Special Importance for the Economic and Business Interest of Montenegro. Out of a total of 28 project managers, 12 are men and 16 are women. The project duration ranges from 3 to 6 months, and beneficiaries are obliged to implement the planned activities by 31.03.2026.

10. IF25_6: Call for fostering innovation culture 2025

Under this Call 21 projects was contracted.

The public call for this Programme <https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Javni-poziv-%E2%80%93-Programska-linija-za-podsticanje-inovacione-kulture-2025.pdf> was launched on 26.04.2025., with the deadline for submitting applications set for 26.05.2025. (<https://fondzainovacije.me/2-4-miliona-eura-za-inovacije-otvoreno-sest-programa-podrske/>).

The purpose of the Programme was to provide support aimed at actively fostering innovation culture in Montenegro during the year in which the call was published. This is achieved through the organisation of events and initiatives focused on the popularisation of innovation and innovative entrepreneurship. In addition, the Programme enables the implementation of activities to raise awareness of the importance of innovation for sustainable development (such as the smart cities concept, green transformation, blue growth, etc.). This programme line also includes the creation of competitions for innovative ideas, hackathons, as well as other activities supporting innovation. The overall objective of the programme is to ensure a continuous contribution to increasing Montenegro's competitiveness and to building an economy based on innovation and knowledge. Another objective is to contribute to the identification of high-quality innovative ideas and their promotion. Through this programme, the aim is to develop skills among young people that are necessary in the innovation development process. Furthermore, the programme focuses on promoting creativity and innovation in education, as well as on gaining business experience.

Project applications were evaluated in accordance with the Rulebook on the Evaluation Process (<https://fondzainovacije.me/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pravilnik-o-evaluacionom-procesu.pdf>).

The total value of the call was €100,000.00, and the grant funding that the Fund could award amounted to up to €8,000.00 per project. Upon completion of the evaluation process, projects submitted by 21 legal entities were approved, including 6 companies, 4 scientific research and public institutions, and 11 non-governmental organisations, with the total amount of allocated funds reaching €165,523.04. Co-financing provided by beneficiaries amounts to €169,287.96. For 6 projects involving companies, €47,986.96 was allocated, while their co-financing amounts to €132,067.42. The missing funds required for contracting positively evaluated projects were secured by the Fund from the line for strengthening existing Fund programmes, financed through the Programme of Investments of Special Importance for the Economic and Business Interest of Montenegro. Out of a total of 21 project managers, 10 are men and 11 are women. Project duration ranges from 3 to 6 months, and beneficiaries are obliged to implement the planned activities by March 31, 2026.

Acting Executive Director



Katarina Lalović

