ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CODE OF PRACTICE (ESCOP) for

CHIP-EAR – Inner-Ear-on-a-Chip as a Research Platform for Functional Restoration of Hearing: Towards a European Research Consortium

DIGITAL, INNOVATION, AND GREEN TECHNOLOGY PROJECT (DIGIT PROJECT)

"ROUTES TO SYNERGIES"

REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA
Ministry of Science,
Education and Youth

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND YOUTH

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ESCOP)

This Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ESCOP) has been developed to guide the identification, avoidance, mitigation, and management of potential environmental and social (E&S) risks and impacts associated with research activities under the project "Inner-Ear-on-a-Chip as a Research Platform for Functional Restoration of Hearing: Towards a European Research Consortium" (DIGIT Project). It reflects internationally recognized good practices in environmental and social management, including occupational and community health and safety, and promotes the protection of human and environmental well-being.

The ESCOP outlines the procedures and responsibilities that all applicants must follow to ensure compliance with the applicable E&S requirements throughout the research process. It is a binding document and forms an integral part of the contractual agreement between the implementing agency and each applicant.

The ESCOP has been prepared in alignment with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), specifically the Environmental and Social Standards (ESS), and is consistent with relevant national legislation and EU regulatory requirements. It serves as a practical tool to ensure that research-related activities are implemented in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, in line with the World Bank's sustainability objectives.

1.2 Project background

The Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology Project (DIGIT) is a strategic investment operation led by the Ministry of Science, Education, and Youth of the Republic of Croatia, with financial support from the World Bank through a €106 million loan agreement signed in June 2023. The project is designed to strengthen Croatia's institutional capacity for research, development, and innovation (RDI) and to promote its transition toward a digital and green economy. Key objectives include enhancing research infrastructure, increasing the effectiveness of public RDI funding, and fostering stronger linkages between academia, industry, and society.

Under the DIGIT project, the Ministry launched the Routes to Synergies which aim is to prepare research consortia for successful participation in future Horizon Europe projects by enhancing their competitiveness through capacity-building measures. It supports initiatives that strengthen research and innovation capacities, improve international competitiveness, and help integrate Croatian research organizations into European networks.

Among the awarded proposals is the project entitled CHIP-EAR – Inner-Ear-on-a-Chip as a Research Platform for Functional Restoration of Hearing: Towards a European Research Consortium.

The project will establish a neuroelectronic research platform combining silicon-oxide-based substrates with in vitro auditory neuron cultures. It prepares for Horizon Europe consortia, focusing on validating neuroelectronic interfaces for hearing restoration.

Key activities:

- Laboratory-based neuronal cell culture (spiral ganglion neurons) on silicon-oxide substrates.
- Development and testing of low-noise electronic interfacing systems.
- Training and capacity-building for postdoctoral researchers in electronics and neurobiology.
- Consortium formation and proposal preparation for Horizon Europe.

All activities will be carried out in the University of Split laboratories under Croatian and EU safety and ethical regulations. Animal use is minimal, strictly regulated, and conducted in accordance with institutional and national ethical guidelines.

The overall environmental risk of the project is low, as activities will take place in a controlled laboratory environment and do not involve construction works or significant pressure on the natural environment. However, certain risks exist, primarily related to the generation of chemical and biological waste such as reagents, dyes, cell culture media and organoids, the disposal of electronic components and prototypes.

Although stakeholders have been consulted during preparation of the project proposal and the stakeholder engagement activities are planned during the implementation the further elaboration of the stakeholder activities during the implementation is needed. The project also ensures compliance with animal welfare standards, ethical approvals, and biosafety protocols. The risk regarding the social aspect is low.

This Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ESCOP) will ensure compliance with international standards and minimize these risks. Emphasis is put on standard biosafety and chemical handling protocols (BSL-2), the safe collection, temporary storage and removal of hazardous and biological waste through authorized waste management operators, and the proper disposal of electronic waste in line with applicable regulations. In addition, all environmental and social risks, including those related to biosafety, animal material handling, occupational health and ethical compliance, will be further elaborated and managed through the ESCOP to be developed under the project. The project activities include laboratory research so the OHS should be addressed.

1.3 Timeline

ESCOP for the project "Inner-Ear-on-a-Chip as a Research Platform for Functional Restoration of Hearing: Towards a European Research Consortium" will be developed in following phases:

1. Draft version of ESCOP: beginning of November 2025;
2. Final version of ESCOP: February 2026;
3. Implementation, monitoring and reporting: March 2026 – February 2027

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project "Inner-Ear-on-a-Chip as a Research Platform for Functional Restoration of Hearing" aims to develop and functionally validate an in vitro neuroelectronic platform integrating cochlear explants, organoid-derived hair cells, and spiral ganglion neurons with custom-designed silicon-oxide microelectrode arrays (MEAs). Experimental activities will take place at the Faculty of Science, University of Split, within certified BSL-2 biological laboratories, electrophysiology suites, and advanced optical imaging facilities. The core procedures include cochlear tissue preparation, co-culture establishment, multichannel MEA recordings, fluid-jet and electrical stimulation, calcium imaging, and immunohistochemistry.

Environmental and social considerations primarily relate to the handling of biological materials derived from laboratory animals, the use of chemicals and fixatives, and the generation of chemical, biological, and electronic waste. These activities are fully supported by the University of Split Animal Facility, overseen by Dr. Daša Ševeljević Jaran, whose extensive international experience ensures compliance with all applicable ethical, biosafety, and animal welfare standards. All workflows follow established institutional procedures for biosafety (BSL-2), chemical management, animal ethics, and occupational health and safety, resulting in a low environmental and social risk profile. No vulnerable groups are affected, and the project contributes positively to society through advances in auditory regeneration research and the development of next-generation neuroelectronic technologies.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CODE OF PRACTICE (ESCOP)

The Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ESCOP) defines the measures required to avoid, minimize, and manage the environmental and social (E&S) risks associated with the Inner-Ear-on-a-Chip project. According to the Environmental and Social Screening, the project carries a low overall risk, with key considerations including biosafety, chemical handling, hazardous and biomedical waste, and the use of animal-derived biological materials.

All research activities will be conducted at the Faculty of Science, University of Split, and at the University of Split Research Animal Facility, within certified BSL-2 biological laboratories, electrophysiology suites, microfabrication and microfluidic spaces, and advanced imaging facilities. These infrastructure units operate in accordance with Croatian national legislation, EU regulatory frameworks (including REACH, CLP, and Directive 2010/63/EU), and established institutional biosafety and occupational health and safety procedures. Project activities include handling cochlear tissues and neuronal cultures, using chemical reagents and fixatives, operating microelectronic and electrophysiological systems, and generating chemical, biological, and electronic waste.

The ESCOP aligns with the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS), including ESS1 (Assessment and Management of E&S Risks), ESS2 (Labor and Working Conditions), ESS3 (Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention), ESS4 (Community Health and Safety), and ESS10 (Stakeholder Engagement). The responsibilities of the University of Split and the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) are defined, along with monitoring and reporting obligations throughout the 12-month implementation period. Measures outlined here apply to all project personnel, visiting researchers, and collaborators. Compliance is monitored semi-annually, and all incidents or grievances are handled in accordance with institutional and World Bank procedures.

The implementation of prescribed mitigation measures will be monitored by PIU during research on a semi-annual basis. Reports will be submitted to the World Bank together with the regular semi-annual reports for DIGIT project (ES compliance reports), with the exception in case of incidents/accidents and establishment of Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).

All project activities are confined to existing laboratory and animal facility premises and do not involve public access or interaction with community members. Therefore, community health and safety risks are negligible. Any emissions, discharges, or waste streams generated during research will be managed through established institutional biosafety, chemical safety, and waste-management systems, ensuring compliance with ESS4.

3.1 Safe work procedures

3.1.1 Laboratory access and authorization

Access to laboratories is limited to trained and authorized personnel. All researchers must complete laboratory-specific safety training covering occupational health and safety, biosafety, chemical safety, and equipment operation. Work in BSL-2 facilities requires prior authorization, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), and the use of biological safety cabinets or fume hoods when handling biological materials or volatile chemicals.

3.1.2 Handling and use of biological material (BSL-2)

Procedures involving cochlear tissues, neuronal cultures, and organoid-derived cells are conducted under certified BSL-2 conditions. Only trained personnel may perform these activities. Required PPE includes laboratory coats, double nitrile gloves, and eye/face protection. Work surfaces and instruments must be disinfected before and after use. All biological materials must be clearly labeled with type,

origin, and hazard information. Autoclaving or chemical disinfection is used for all contaminated materials prior to disposal.

3.1.3 Grievance Redress Mechanism

A confidential and accessible Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be available to all project workers, including students, visiting researchers, and technical staff. Grievances may be submitted anonymously through the University of Split's existing reporting channels or directly to the PIU. All grievances will be logged, acknowledged within a reasonable timeframe, and resolved in line with institutional procedures and the World Bank's ESS2 and ESS10 requirements. Records of grievances and responses will be included in the semi-annual ES compliance reports.

3.2 Laboratory biosafety and animal material protocols

Work involving animal-derived biological materials is conducted under certified BSL-2 conditions and institutional standard operating procedures. Personnel handling animal tissues must hold FELASA-equivalent training in laboratory animal science.

All procedures involving animal-derived tissues are performed under authorization issued by the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate for Veterinary and Food Safety (Class: UP/I-322-01/21-01/52; Reg. No.: 525-09/589-23-7). The approval covers experimental work under institutional permit HR-POK-022, with all animal housing, anesthesia, euthanasia, and tissue extraction carried out at the University of Split Research Animal Facility (permit HR-POK-019), which meets national and EU requirements for animal welfare, veterinary supervision, and procedural oversight.

The Ministry's authorization and the opinion of the Ethical Committee for the Protection of Animals Used in Science (EP 346-1/2023) confirm that the project is scientifically justified, follows the principles of Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement (3Rs), and is designed to minimize procedural burden, pain, and distress. All procedures are non-recovery, performed under full anesthesia, and conclude with humane euthanasia in accordance with Annex IV of relevant legislation. Designated veterinarians and institutional welfare officers oversee compliance and ensure that tissue preparation and transfer to downstream BSL-2 laboratories occur under ethically compliant and controlled conditions.

3.3 Waste management

3.3.1 Chemical waste

Fixatives such as paraformaldehyde, solvent residues, dyes, and immunohistochemistry reagents must be collected in clearly labeled, sealed containers and stored in ventilated chemical cabinets until removed by licensed hazardous-waste contractors. Chemical spill kits must be accessible and maintained.

3.3.2 Biological waste

Biohazardous waste, including tissue remnants, culture materials, and contaminated consumables, must be placed in designated biohazard containers and treated through accredited biomedical waste channels. Autoclaving or approved chemical disinfection is mandatory before disposal.

3.3.3 Electronic waste

MEA components, prototype sensors, printed circuit boards, cables, and batteries must be collected in designated e-waste containers and transferred to authorized electronic-waste handlers in compliance with Croatian WEEE regulations.

3.4 Post-experiment cleanup

Workstations must be cleaned immediately after use. Surfaces are disinfected, instruments sterilized, and waste segregated into appropriate streams. Sharps must be disposed of in puncture-resistant containers. Any chemical or biological spills must be addressed using spill kits and reported to laboratory supervisors.

3.5 Occupational health and safety (OHS)

OHS safeguards include RCD-protected electrical systems, training for high-voltage and high-temperature equipment, ergonomic workstations, and accessible emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, eyewash stations, and safety showers. All hazards, injuries, or near-misses must be reported promptly. Pregnant or medically vulnerable workers may request modified duties to avoid hazardous exposures.

The project will not involve any form of child labor or forced labor. All project workers will have fair, safe, and non-discriminatory working conditions in accordance with Croatian labor legislation and ESS2. Equal opportunity and non-discrimination will be ensured for all personnel, including foreign researchers, or visiting staff, with appropriate working hours, rest periods, and protective provisions for pregnant or medically vulnerable workers.

3.6 Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Mandatory PPE includes laboratory coats, double gloves for biological work, protective eyewear, and FFP2 masks where ventilation is insufficient. Electrostatic-discharge (ESD) gloves and wrist straps are required during MEA and microelectronics handling. PPE must be stored appropriately, maintained, and replaced when necessary.

3.7 Energy efficiency and environmental footprint

Where feasible, incubators, MEA amplifiers, and microscopy systems should operate in energy-saving modes. Use of single-use plastics should be minimized, and environmentally responsible procurement is encouraged.

3.8 Training and personnel competency

All researchers must complete mandatory safety and biosafety training at project initiation. Specialized training in electrophysiology, MEA handling, tissue culture, and related methods is required before independent work. All training participation is documented.

3.9 Communication and language accessibility

Safety documentation, SOPs, signage, and emergency procedures are provided in English to ensure comprehension by all researchers, including foreign staff. Pictograms and standardized color-coding are used to enhance clarity.

3.10 Monitoring, reporting, and continuous improvement

An internal system records incidents, near-misses, and safety concerns. Regular laboratory inspections assess compliance with OHS, biosafety requirements, chemical storage, PPE use, and waste management. Records of training, inspections, and corrective actions are stored securely.

3.11 Intellectual property

Intellectual property is managed in accordance with University of Split regulations. Potentially patentable innovations, including MEA-related technologies, experimental methods, or datasets, are assessed for protection and commercialization potential.

3.12 Stakeholder engagement

The project engages consortium partners through workshops and an international symposium, enabling the exchange of scientific, safety, and ethical practices. Stakeholder engagement supports transparency and responsible dissemination while safeguarding sensitive research outputs.

Aspect	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	
		Implementation	Monitoring and reporting
SAFE WORK PROCEDURES			
Laboratory access and authorization	a) Access to all project laboratories is restricted to trained and authorized personnel who have completed mandatory safety inductions, including biosafety, chemical safety, and equipment-specific training. b) Entry to BSL-2 biological laboratories, electrophysiology suites, microfabrication/microfluidic spaces, and other high-risk research areas require prior approval by the responsible laboratory supervisor. c) All work involving biological materials or volatile chemicals must be performed inside Class II biological safety cabinets or certified chemical fume hoods, following institutional biosafety procedures. d) Personnel may access the University of Split Research Animal Facility only with documented authorization and in accordance with facility SOPs, animal-welfare requirements, and veterinary oversight. Laboratory access logs, training records, and authorization lists must be maintained and periodically reviewed to ensure compliance.	University of Split	PIU
Handling and use of biological material	e) Work involving biological material (e.g. cochlear tissue, neuronal cell lines) is foreseen to be conducted under Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) conditions, in accordance with institutional biosafety protocols. f) Only trained personnel are expected to handle biological material, with access restricted to approved laboratory zones and recorded via access control systems or lab logs. g) All procedures involving fresh or preserved tissues, cultures, or biospecimens are to be carried out on disinfected surfaces, using sterile tools and personal protective equipment (double gloves, lab coats, face shields). h) Waste derived from biological activities (e.g. tissue remnants, pipette tips, culture containers) will be disposed of in biohazard-labeled containers, with subsequent disposal through licensed biomedical waste contractors. i) All biological materials will be labeled clearly, including information on type, source, and associated risks. Freezers and cold storage units will include hazard signs and inventory records. j) A biosafety manual and standard operating procedures (SOPs**)** will be made available in the lab, and practical training will be provided to all staff prior to engaging in biological work.	University of Split	PIU

Aspect	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	
		Implementation	Monitoring and reporting
	k) Surface decontamination, autoclaving, or chemical disinfection (e.g. with ethanol, hypochlorite) will be routinely performed after experiments. l) Biological sample transport (internal or external) will follow packaging and labeling protocols, with traceability logs maintained.		
Waste management	m) Waste streams are expected to be clearly separated at the source into designated containers (e.g. chemical, biological, electronic, sharp, and general waste), with appropriate color-coding and signage. n) Chemical waste such as isopropanol residues, resin containers, and solvent-soaked wipes will be collected in clearly labeled containers and stored temporarily in a ventilated, lockable cabinet until disposal by a certified hazardous waste handler. o) Biological waste, including tissue remnants, gloves used in sample preparation, and contaminated disposables, is foreseen to be disposed of via accredited biomedical waste channels, in accordance with biosafety protocols (e.g. BSL-2). p) Electronic waste (e.g. used sensors, PCB scraps, batteries) will be stored separately in e-waste bins and transferred periodically to authorized collection centers, in line with national WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) regulations. q) Spill kits will be maintained for both chemical and biological spills, with clear instructions and training provided during induction. All spills are expected to be documented and reviewed. r) Waste handling staff and researchers will receive induction training that includes proper segregation procedures, labelling, storage, and emergency protocols in the event of mislabelling or accidental exposure. s) Documentation of all waste pickups, quantities, and contractors is foreseen to ensure compliance with university policies and national environmental legislation.	University of Split	PIU
Post-experiment clean up and waste disposal	t) All workstations must be cleaned immediately after use. u) Waste streams (chemical, metal, plastic, organic) will be segregated and clearly labelled. v) Sharp objects (e.g., broken specimens) will be disposed of in puncture-proof containers. w) Spill kits will be readily available, and their use will be demonstrated during induction.	University of Split	PIU

Aspect	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	
		Implementation	Monitoring and reporting
Laboratory Biosafety and Animal Material Protocols	x) Work will be conducted under certified Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) laboratory conditions with proper documentation and ventilation. y) Staff working with animal-derived materials will provide proof of FELASA or equivalent laboratory animal science certification.	University of Split	PIU
OHS			
OHS procedures	a) Sharps containers will be provided for disposal of pipette tips, scalpels, and fine needles used during dissections. b) Cold storage units (e.g., freezers, refrigerators) storing biological material will be labeled with hazard signs and content logs. c) Access to high-voltage or high-temperature equipment (e.g. soldering stations, electrophysiology rigs) is expected to be restricted to personnel who have completed specific training and competency assessment. d) Electrical safety will be supported through the use of residual current devices (RCDs), surge protection, and annual inspection of power cables, plugs, and lab-specific circuit breakers. e) Cold storage units (e.g. freezers storing biological samples or chemicals) are expected to be clearly labeled with hazard signs, defrost maintenance logs, and emergency contacts. f) Ergonomic risks will be addressed by providing height-adjustable chairs, workbenches, microscope stands, and monitor arms, as well as encouraging scheduled posture breaks during repetitive tasks (e.g. pipetting, data processing). g) Sharps safety will be ensured through the use of puncture-resistant containers for disposal of scalpels, fine needles, and broken glass slides, located at all relevant workstations. h) All staff will be made aware of emergency equipment locations (e.g. fire extinguishers, eye wash stations, spill kits), and regular mock drills may be conducted to support preparedness.	University of Split	PIU

Aspect	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	
		Implementation	Monitoring and reporting
	i) In case of pregnancy or other health-related vulnerabilities, temporary task modifications will be made available to protect the staff member from potential risks (e.g. exposure to solder fumes, chemical handling, lifting loads).		
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)			
Mandatory PPE requirements	a) The use of respiratory protection (e.g. FFP2 masks) is foreseen in cases where soldering or cleaning is performed without sufficient fume extraction. b) When handling biological samples (e.g. cochlear tissues, neuronal cells), personnel are expected to use double nitrile gloves, disposable lab coats, and face shields to minimize exposure risks. c) Personal protective equipment is expected to be clearly designated and separated for use in chemical and biological zones to avoid cross-contamination. d) Anti-static wristbands and ESD-safe gloves are foreseen for safe manipulation of electronic components and sensitive circuits during prototyping and diagnostic testing. e) PPE requirements will be visibly displayed in relevant laboratory areas using signage and pictograms. f) A log system for tracking PPE-related incidents (e.g. damage, misuse, or non-compliance) is expected to support continuous improvement through retraining where needed.	University of Split	PIU
Maintenance and storage	g) PPE will be regularly inspected, cleaned, and replaced as needed to ensure safety and effectiveness. h) PPE will be stored in designated, clean areas, with usage and maintenance tracked in a log. *i)* Personnel will receive training on proper PPE handling, ensuring compliance with safety standards.	University of Split	PIU
ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT			
Energy efficiency	a) Laboratory devices such as incubators, sensors, and electrophysiology setups will be operated in energy-saving modes where feasible. b) Measures will be taken to minimize single-use plastics and track consumption of laboratory disposables.	University of Split	PIU

Aspect	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	
		Implementation	Monitoring and reporting
TRAINING AND PERSONNEL COMPETENCY			
Researcher and team qualifications	a) All personnel involved have academic or professional experience in neurobiology, electrophysiology, tissue culture, microfluidics, microelectronics, biomedical engineering, or other fields relevant to inner-ear-on-a-chip research. b) The lead researcher has a background in engineering and composite materials.	University of Split	PIU
Safety training program	c) The host institution will provide comprehensive laboratory safety training at the project's start. Topics include: d) Fire safety and evacuation e) Chemical handling and storage f) Emergency procedures (chemical spills, power failure, injury response) g) Safe use of electrophysiology equipment, microelectrode arrays (MEA), microscopes, microfluidic platforms, and associated laboratory systems h) Training will include hands-on instruction and formal assessments. i) Attendance is mandatory and documented.	University of Split	PIU
Ongoing supervision and mentoring	j) High-risk tasks will be performed under supervision until competence is demonstrated. k) Regular refreshers and toolbox talks will be conducted, especially after any incident or procedural change.	University of Split	PIU
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY			
Communication and language accessibility	a) Important information and particularly related to safety must be presented in language(s) accessible to these researchers and staff.	University of Split	PIU
	b) All safety instructions and emergency procedures must be provided in English, as the foreign workers (researcher) understand it. c) Pictograms and color-coded labels must be used to communicate safety instructions clearly, with English as the primary language.	University of Split	PIU
	d) Safety training must be conducted in English to ensure foreign workers / researcher fully understand the procedures.	University of Split	PIU

Aspect	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	
		Implementation	Monitoring and reporting
	e) Accessible reporting systems must be in place, with English-language support available for safety concerns.	University of Split	PIU
MONITORING, REPORTING, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT			
Incident reporting	a) An internal system will be set up to report and track any accidents, near-misses, or unsafe conditions. b) This data will be reviewed periodically to improve safety measures. c) Incident reports must be submitted to the PIU immediately, and not later than 24 hours, after any serious event which has, or is likely to have, a significant adverse effect on the environment, the affected communities, the public or workers. Incident reports will provide sufficient detail regarding the scope, severity, and possible causes of the incident or accident, indicating immediate measures taken or that are planned to be taken to address it.	University of Split	PIU
Safety inspections	d) Regular safety inspections and audits will be conducted to assess compliance with OHS protocols and identify areas for improvement. e) Inspections will assess the condition of PPE, the maintenance of equipment, the proper storage of hazardous materials, and the general cleanliness and safety of the laboratory or testing environments.	University of Split	PIU
Documentation and recordkeeping	f) Documentation and recordkeeping will track all safety inspections, incident reports, PPE usage, training sessions, equipment maintenance, and emergency drills. g) All records will be securely stored and retained for the required duration, enabling effective monitoring and response to safety issues.	University of Split	PIU
Continuous improvement	h) OHS protocols will be updated regularly based on feedback, emerging risks, and changes in equipment or methodology	University of Split	PIU
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY			
Intellectual property management	a) Intellectual property generated during the project will be managed in accordance with the policies of the University of Split	University of Split	PIU

Aspect	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	
		Implementation	Monitoring and reporting
	b) Appropriate protection measures such as copyright registration, trade secrets, or patents, where applicable will be identified and implemented.		
Professional guidance	c) Professional guidance on IP management and offering training sessions for the researcher on intellectual property rights, licensing and exploitation strategies will be managed.	University of Split	PIU
Innovations	d) All innovations, whether software tools, microelectrode array (MEA) designs, experimental protocols, datasets, analysis pipelines, or other research outputs with commercialization potential.	University of Split	PIU
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT			
Dissemination	a) Open science practices will be applied whenever appropriate to support early dissemination and transparency, while ensuring that sensitive or potentially exploitable project outputs are protected prior to release. b) Clear licensing terms (e.g., Creative Commons or open-source software licenses) will be applied to those outputs intended for public sharing c) A communication plan will be established to gather ES-related feedback from partner institutions (e.g., Geneva, Utrecht) on material use and ethical compliance. d) Dissemination activities will transparently address safety measures and environmental considerations adopted during the project lifecycle.	University of Split	PIU
GRM	e) Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) shall be established by providing an publishing on the website e-mail address where the interested public, either groups or individuals, could send complaints, comments and/or suggestions. The e-mail address shall be reported to the DIGIT GRM of the CSF at grmdigit@hrzz.hr f) Information on such received complaints, comments, and suggestions should be archived in a logical framework database and reported to the DIGIT Project GRM of the CSF on monthly bases, together with information on the measures taken following received complaints, comments and/or suggestions.	University of Split	PIU