HrZZ

Hrvatska zaklada
za znanost

Call for Proposals

"Research Projects"

(Call identifier: IP-2020-02)

About the Programme

The "Research Projects" Programme finances *fundamental* research that creates new, and improves existing, knowledge about a particular area and is aimed at a better understanding of the research subject, as well as *applied* research conducted with clear technological, economic or social objectives.

The proposed topic must be internationally recognisable and/or nationally relevant, and the Applicant must have an excellent track record. The projects that will be supported through this Call should be based on strong research teams set up at Croatian scientific organizations, whose Principal Investigators are internationally and nationally esteemed scientists and include establishing connections between scientific organizations, equipment, the development of scientific capacities and planning the development of young researchers. Consolidation of research is encouraged in order to raise the quality of research and the creation of internationally competitive and recognisable research groups.

The aims of the Call:

- to create new knowledge that will contribute to the strengthening of Croatian economy and the welfare of society;
- to encourage the establishment of connections between researchers and the creation of recognisable research groups that deal with internationally and/or nationally significant issues, whose Principal Investigators are prominent scientists with internationally recognized achievements;
- to create scientific research groups that can be competitive at the international level and scientists who are capable of mentoring a new generation of young researchers;
- to develop scientific and research potentials in Croatia.

The Applicant

- The scientist responsible for scientific research and management of the entire project;

- An active researcher (must hold a PhD, be experienced in project management, have an active research group set up, which shall be evident from the list of achievements of the Principal Investigator, relevant publications and/or patents within the research field of the proposed project) with internationally recognized achievements and proven history of successful mentorship of young researchers;

- Is permanently employed at a public university, public research institute in the Republic of Croatia or other legal entities that perform scientific activity and are registered in the Register of Scientific Organisations of the Ministry of Science and Education and meet the minimum conditions prescribed by the Regulation on the Conditions for Issuing a Permit for Performing Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-accreditation of Scientific Organisations and the Content of the Permit (OG 83/10). The Applicant can submit a project proposal only in the area for which the scientific organisation in which he/she is employed and where the project will be implemented has been accredited;

- Regular members of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts may submit project proposals;

- A single Applicant may submit only one project proposal per Call.

A single researcher may simultaneously hold the status of a Principal Investigator and/or team member on a maximum of two research projects and/or installation research projects that have been proposed or are in progress, in such a manner that he/she may be the Principal Investigator on one and team member on another project or as team member on two projects. For this Call, the above rule shall not apply to researchers who are Principal Investigators and/or team members on projects ending on 31st December 2020.

Principal Investigators of projects financed within the Tenure Track Pilot Programme and Research Cooperability Programme are not eligible applicants, but they may be team members on one project financed by HRZZ.

Competitiveness of the research group is not possible without the support of the scientific institution in which the Applicant is employed. Therefore, HRZZ will support projects with clearly defined and active support of the scientific institution in which the proposed project will be implemented (adequate facilities, administrative support, existing scientific infrastructure, equipment that will made available to the Principal Investigator, etc.).

Terms and Conditions of the Call

Projects that will be financed through this call should meet the following criteria

- Projects implemented in the period of 4 years that deal with internationally competitive and nationally relevant issues and include establishing connections between scientific organizations and equipment;
- Projects with a clear scientific contribution;
- Projects implemented by an active research group, whose contribution is transparent and planned according to the project's work plan;
- Research that is strongly and unquestionably supported by a scientific organisation;
- Relevant research that contributes to the development of science and society and creation of new knowledge and technologies. This includes new research that has not been previously conducted in any form whatsoever nor funded from other sources, including participation in longitudinal or long-term research conducted as part of cooperation in international partnerships or as part of international longitudinal research or research already funded from other sources;
- Applications for the resumption of a project funded by the HRZZ must clearly demonstrate the development of research objectives. HRZZ will not support projects that replicate the objectives of previously funded projects; this will be checked during the evaluation.

Funding

The overall budget for the Call "Research Projects" in 2020 is HRK 40,000,000.00.

The funding should be evenly distributed throughout the whole project implementation period.

The total requested funds should be a realistic estimate of the research needs and be justifiable in full.

Maximum project funds: between HRK 1,000,000.00 and 1,500,000.00, or, in case of projects in the Social Sciences and the Humanities, between HRK 600,000.00 and 900,000.00. Funding may be increased due to higher material costs of the research or purchase of scientific equipment for research groups with a larger number of researchers.

The minimum funding of a project, excluding personnel costs (Category 2 in the Financial Plan), shall be HRK 300,000.00.

Types of eligible expenses [1]:

- research costs;
- personnel costs (employment of postdoctoral researchers);
- equipment purchase and equipment maintenance costs (maximum HRK 500,000.00 for the whole project);
- dissemination, training and cooperation costs (up to HRK 70,000.00 per year, or HRK 105,000.00 for the period of 18 months);
- indirect costs – maximum 5% of total funds requested from HRZZ, only if they are directly connected with project activities and they cannot be placed into any of the categories of eligible costs and they can be justified and specified.

Project proposals whose financial plans are not realistic, which have not been justified in a clear manner and which do not have all institutional resources at their disposal will be evaluated negatively. Excessive expenses may be a reason for rejecting a project proposal, even those with high-quality content.

The Financial Plan of the project shall be drafted so that it is a reflection of the project's realistic needs. If the Financial Plan includes ineligible expenses, whose exclusion would challenge the implementation of the project, the proposal shall not be financed.

If the project proposal or part of the proposal that is submitted to the Call is already being financed from another source or has been submitted to a call, the Applicant shall, in the section "Resources" of the Application Form, list all relevant information regarding the parts of the proposal that are financed from other sources (equipment, specific activities etc.), sources, duration of financing and amount. This information will not be subject to evaluation, i.e. will not be considered advantageous or disadvantageous to the Applicant. However, prior to contracting, additional evaluation may be conducted that would be used to determine the feasibility of parallel implementation and double financing. In case of significant overlap with the other project, HRZZ may adopt a decision on rejecting financing of the project proposal.

Application content and submission process[2]

All documents related to the project proposal shall be submitted on application forms **in electronic format only** through the electronic proposal submission system (EPP system), which can be accessed via the HRZZ website or through the following link https://epp.hrzz.hr/.

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[1] Please find a more detailed explanation of eligible and ineligible costs in the *Guidelines for Applicants to the Croatian Science Foundation's Calls*.

[2] Please find more details on the content of the application and guidelines on how to complete the application in the document *Guidelines for Applicants to the Croatian Science Foundation's Calls.*

All documentation related to the application shall be submitted in both Croatian and English. The Applicant shall be responsible for the equivalence of both language versions of the project proposal and HRZZ will not be responsible for any discrepancies.

Project proposals must be full and submitted to the electronic system by the time defined in the Call. **Incomplete proposals and proposals submitted after the Call closure will not be taken into consideration.**

Mandatory content of the Application:

1. **Administrative Form** – it should bear the original signatures of the Principal Investigator and the Head of the Institution and the Institution's stamp.

2. **Extended Abstract Form** – it should contain the most relevant information about the project proposal, following the provided template. **The first evaluation round will be conducted based on this form; hence it should contain all relevant information about the project proposal.**

3. **Application Form,** which contains:
   - Part A – CV of the Principal Investigator, five-year track record, including the Principal Investigator's most important papers, of which they are the lead or corresponding author and other relevant achievements;
   - Part B – detailed description of the project proposal;
   - Part C – contains the list of research group members and their CVs.

4. **Institutional Support Letter** (document on a maximum of 2 pages, containing a detailed and complete description of the support provided by the Institution, signed by the Applicant and the Head of the Institution and bearing the Institution's stamp);

5. Signed **Letters of Intent** for participation in the proposed project for all research group members who are not employed at the Institution hosting the project (Letter of Intent for an associate from Croatia shall be signed by the Head of the Institution and the associate, while the Letter of Intent for an associate from abroad shall be signed by the associate);

6. **Financial Plan** with elaborated financial resources required that need to be connected with specific objectives and activities from the Work Plan;

7. **Work Plan** with the activities connected to the objectives, their sequencing and time of realisation, milestones and deliverables.

Additional documentation:

- Ethical approval;
- Applicants who submitted a project proposal to a previous HRZZ Call and received a negative evaluation should, apart from the mandatory forms, submit the document Repeated Submission to HRZZ's Calls Report Form. If the current project proposal is identical or similar to the previous one, this form should explain in what way the comments of the panel and/or peer reviewers were accounted for in the repeated submission. If the project proposal is not related to the previous negatively evaluated

proposals, the form should state that the current proposal is not identical or similar to them.

- Other relevant documentation.

During the second round of project proposal evaluation, applicants who are already Principal Investigators on HRZZ projects that will have finished after the deadline for the IP-2019-04 Call will be required to submit a project progress report, on the form available under the Call documentation.

All documents listed from 1 to 7 are mandatory for all applicants. Incomplete applications will not be taken into consideration.

Following the Call closure, HRZZ will conduct an administrative check of the submitted proposals in order to determine whether the documentation has been submitted on time and in full. In case supplements are necessary, HRZZ will notify the Principal Investigator of the required supplements in writing. In case the project proposal does not meet the administrative check criteria even after submitting the supplements or the supplements have not been delivered in the available period, the project proposal will not be sent to evaluation.

Before submitting the project proposal, it is necessary to study the Guidelines for Applicants to the Croatian Science Foundation's Calls. The Guidelines are available at the Foundation's website www.hrzz.hr.

Evaluation

The project proposal evaluation procedure will include Croatian and international experts.

The evaluation procedure includes the following steps:

1. Project proposals that passed the administrative check, contain the complete and appropriately verified documentation and meet the terms and conditions of the Call will be sent to evaluation.

2. Evaluation panel members shall evaluate the project proposals according to the evaluation criteria for the Call "Research Projects" (deadline: 2019-04). First evaluation round will be based on the Extended Abstract Form as well as on the Work and Financial Plans.

3. Project proposals that have been evaluated positively (obtained the mark "A" in the first evaluation round) shall be sent to peer review.

4. Peer review of project proposals will be conducted by international experts based on the complete project documentation, according to the evaluation criteria for the Call "Research Projects" (deadline: 2019-04).

5. After the peer review, evaluation panel members shall evaluate complete project proposals according to additional criteria, as defined in the Evaluation Form C.

At the end of the evaluation, the panels will form a ranking list, based on which project proposals will be recommended for financing. The estimated duration of the evaluation is between seven and nine months.

Evaluation criteria are available on the HRZZ website: www.hrzz.hr.

Project proposal submission deadline

Deadline for submitting project proposals is **13 February 2020 until 13:00 CET. Project proposals submitted after the specified date will not be accepted and we invite all applicants to submit their applications in a timely manner.**

Contact

All enquiries related to the Call should be sent only via the following e-mail address: istrazivacki@hrzz.hr. Responses to the received questions will be published twice a week in the Frequently Asked Questions section at the HRZZ website. Before submitting a query to the email address mentioned above, the applicants should check the already published answers to frequently asked questions as HRZZ will not replicate answers to questions that have already been raised.