



Call for Proposals
“Installation Research Projects”

(Call identifier: UIP-2020-02)

Support to scientists for establishing
an autonomous research career

This Call has been prepared in line with the general regulations of the Croatian Science Foundation. By applying to this Call, you shall accept the implementation thereof. The terms used in the masculine gender are neutral and shall refer to persons of both genders.

Before submitting their project proposals, applicants should study the Guidelines for Applicants to the Croatian Science Foundation's Calls. The Guidelines are available at the HRZZ website (www.hrzz.hr).

About the Programme

The Strategic Plan of the Croatian Science Foundation (hereinafter: HRZZ) states that the its objectives are to secure stable financing of competitive research and installation research projects in regular and predictable multi-annual cycles, contributing to uniform development of research in all areas of science.

The aim of the Programme is to support the development of independent research careers of young scientists and new research teams that engage in internationally recognisable and nationally relevant topics. The Call represents a logical sequel to post-doctoral specialization and focuses on the moment in the careers of young scientists at which they are prepared to develop new research topics and/or methodologies. In order to retain as many scientists as possible in Croatia, but also to attract talented researchers from abroad, the science infrastructure needs to be enhanced on a continuous basis, as well as the science system as a whole. According to the 2015 UNESCO SCIENCE REPORT – *Towards 2030*, Croatia is ranked 137th (of 148 countries) for the capability to retain its young talented scientists and 141st for its capability to attract talented researchers from abroad. The goal of the Programme “Installation Research Projects” (Call identifier: UIP-2020-02) is providing support to the establishment of new research groups of young scientists in order to accelerate the establishment of autonomous research careers after the acquisition of a doctoral degree. Scientists who were evaluated positively will have the ability to establish their own research groups that will engage in innovative research topics.

A new research group shall be formed for the purpose of implementing the research, hence project funds may be used to cover the cost of the salary of the PhD student and/or post-doctoral researcher who shall be the core of the new research group. The research group may also consist of young researchers whose employment is not covered by the project’s funds, but who take part in project activities. Funding provided by HRZZ in the five-year period shall represent a solid foundation for research independence and successful implementation of an internationally competitive project as it enables financing of research costs, acquisition of crucial scientific equipment, recruitment of new research team members and dissemination, collaboration and training for research team members.

HRZZ expects applicants to have an excellent track record and exhibit potential for preparing, organising and implementing a five-year project. Apart from successful implementation of the project’s work plan, the Applicant is expected to successfully manage the research team, guide the development of young researchers as well as develop and secure sustainability of the research team and the research upon the end of the project through applying to other competitive Croatian and international sources of funding. The elements referred to above need to be elaborated and visible in the project proposal as they are one of the crucial elements of evaluation, both in the application and project monitoring stages.

Since the basic selection criteria are quality and innovation potential of the research and topic that is internationally recognisable and nationally relevant, the applicants shall enjoy the freedom to define the research topic in all scientific areas at their own discretion.

The main pre-requisite for all of the above is strong support of the scientific organization at which the Applicant is or will be employed during the project implementation period (hereinafter: the

Institution). The Institution should, in a clear and concrete manner, provide support to the work of the emerging research group and describe how the new research topic would integrate in the Institution's existing development strategy.

About the Call:

Objective: supporting the development of autonomous research careers of young scientists in its crucial stage, when they are capable of establishing a new research group that would deal with internationally competitive and/or nationally relevant scientific topics.

Call opening date: 29th November 2019

Application deadline: 13th February 2020

The Call is open to all scientific fields

The Applicant: scientist who acquired his/her PhD more than 2 but less than 7 years ago from the closing date of the Installation Research Projects Call.

Annual budget of the Programme: the overall budget for the calls "Installation Research Projects" and "Research Projects" in 2020 is HRK 60,000,000.00, of which about HRK 20,000,000.00 is reserved for Installation Research Projects

Maximum total amount of HRZZ funding per project: up to HRK 2,000,000.00 or, in case of Social Sciences and Humanities, up to HRK 1,500,000.00 per project.

Financing period: 5 years

Expected start of the project: November 2020

Who?

The Applicant shall be a scientist who meets the following conditions:

- S/he acquired his/her PhD not less than 2, but not more than 7¹ years ago from the closing date of the present Call;
- S/he is 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:

¹ HRZZ will consider Applicants and research group members who acquired their PhDs more than seven years ago if they deliver a proof of parental leave or long-term illness; this period will be deducted from the time elapsed from the date of PhD award. In case of maternity leave, the time elapsed from the date of PhD award will be extended for 16 months for every child born before or after the date of PhD award. In case of paternity leave, the time elapsed from the date of PhD award will be extended for the actual period of paternity leave for every child born before or after the date of PhD award. For long-term illnesses or clinical treatments, time elapsed from the date of PhD award will be extended for the period of absence due to treatment after the date of the PhD award. For Applicants holding a PhD and are undergoing internship, eligibility period shall be extended for the duration of the internship after the date of PhD award. However, in any of the cases mentioned above the total time elapsed from the date of PhD award may not exceed 11 years.

- S/he has an excellent career track record and demonstrates the potential for managing a research group and the development of new research topics and/or methodologies;
- At the moment of submitting the application, s/he is not the Principal Investigator of any project financed by HRZZ, was not the Principal Investigator of a previous Installation Research Project financed by HRZZ, has not been listed as a team member on any project proposal within the present Call (UIP-2020-02) and is not the Principal Investigator on any project funded from other sources within calls with similar objectives;
- The Applicant may be a team member of one ongoing Research Project financed by HRZZ or may be listed as team member on one project proposal submitted to the HRZZ Call "Research Projects" published in 2020;
- The Applicant may submit only one project proposal in the capacity of Principal Investigator at the 2020 Call.

HRZZ expects the Principal Investigator to dedicate 55% of his/her working hours to the proposed project.

Institution:

Support of the Institution is a pre-requisite for submitting a project proposal to this Call; therefore, it must be detailed and contain a clear description of all required elements. The explanatory part of the institutional support should clearly demonstrate the following: that the Applicant is or will be employed throughout the project financing period, how the research fits into the Institution's long-term strategy, that the Institution will provide infrastructural, technical and administrative support and ensure that the Applicant would be able to dedicate the prescribed amount of working hours (55%) to the project, which would enable unhindered achievement of the work plan and objective of the present Call. The Institution must provide clear support the work of the emerging research group and demonstrate the support to the researchers even after the project has finished. The support of the Institution shall also include the support to the development of the topics of the proposed research and present how the development of the new line of research fits into the institution's research strategy in the long term.

Apart from this, the Institution should explain in what way it would support the emerging research group and encourage and facilitate the autonomy of the Principal Investigator in every year of project implementation. The Institution must warrant that the Principal Investigator would not bear a significant administrative burden or significant teaching duties, while the institutional support must include clear and concrete support to the researcher and the process of him/her becoming an independent researcher.

The support should be clear, measurable and detailed.

What?

Research:

- in all areas of science;

- new, original research aimed at creating new knowledge, systems, processes, services, patents, solving practical objectives or their improvements;
- opening new research topics or methodologies, thus demonstrating the autonomy of the researcher and is not funded from other sources;
- dealing with internationally recognised and/or nationally relevant topics;
- that bears the support of a scientific organization.

Establishment of a research group and/or laboratory:

- For the purpose of implementing the project, a research group shall be established in the first year;
- The establishment and development of the research group will be monitored, with the support of the Institution, on the basis of efficacy in developing a new research topic and/or methodology, publishing papers in high-quality journals, international networking of researchers etc., applying to EU programmes and other competitive calls for research proposals during project implementation, and especially in the final two year of project implementation;
- The minimum number of research group members shall be three (*including the Principal Investigator and post-doctoral researcher or doctoral student whose employment is envisioned in the proposed Financial Plan*). The group may comprise of only two members in the first year if the Work Plan envisions the enlargement of the group for the purpose of achieving project objectives;
- Throughout the duration of the project, the research group may comprise only of members who acquired their PhD not more than 7 years before the closing date of the Call, doctoral students and students;
- Other researchers may be involved in project implementation, but they shall not be considered research group members.

Financing

The overall budget for the calls “Installation Research Projects” and “Research Projects” in 2020 is HRK 60,000,000.00. The total budget available for Installation Research Projects is around HRK 20,000,000.00. The maximum funds available per project may be requested if it envisions the employment of doctoral students or post-doctoral researchers.

The maximum funds awarded by HRZZ may equal HRK 2,000,000.00 per project. In the Social Sciences and Humanities, this maximum amount shall equal HRK 1,500,000.00 per project.

The total requested funds should be a realistic estimate of the research needs and be justifiable in full, which will be assessed by the evaluation experts. HRZZ shall disburse the funds to the bank account of the Institution employing the Principal Investigator submitting the proposal.

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 "Installation Research Projects" Programme shall fund projects implemented in the period of 5 years. The total amount of funds shall be distributed throughout the 5 years in line with project activity needs.

The following expenses shall be eligible²:

- research costs;
- personnel costs (employment of doctoral students or post-doctoral researchers)³;
- equipment and maintenance costs;
- dissemination, training and cooperation costs for research group members (up to HRK 70,000.00 per year);
- indirect costs – maximum 10% 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 properly justified and specified*).

The minimum funds requested for project implementation, excluding personnel costs, shall be HRK 500,000.00.

Applying to the Call

Application deadline: 13 February 2020 @13.00 (CET)

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.

All documents related to the application shall be submitted in a single submission via the electronic proposal submission system (EPP), which is accessible via the HRZZ website or through the following link: <https://epp.hrzz.hr/>.

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

³ When employing postdoctoral researchers, Principal Investigators and the institutions at which they are to be employed shall be obliged to abide by all provisions of national legislation and the instructions on the eligibility of salary costs as prescribed by HRZZ, which can be found at the HRZZ website.

2. Project proposal:

- **Extended Abstract Form** – it should contain the most relevant information about the project proposal, following the provided template;
- **Application form**, which contains:
 - Part A – Curriculum Vitae of the Applicant, five-year track record, including the Applicant's most important papers which prove his/her eligibility;
 - Part B – detailed description of the project proposal based on the latest insights in the area of research, objectives, methodology, required material and human resources, ethical issues;
 - Part C – contains the list of research group members, their roles and tasks and short CVs (apart from research group members who are envisioned to be employed at later stages – only their profile and expected competencies are listed).
- **Mandatory documents:**
 - **Institutional Support Letter** (document describing the support provided by the Institution, including a detailed description of the manner in which appropriate conditions for the establishment of the research group or laboratory have been secured and of the support toward the accomplishment of the objectives of the present Call, signed by the Applicant and the Head of the Institution and bearing the Institution's stamp);
 - Signed **Letters of Intent** for participation in the proposed project for all research group members known at the time of submission of the application who are not employed at the Institution hosting the project; Letter of Intent for a research group member shall be signed by the Head of the Institution and the team member;
 - **Work Plan** with the activities connected to the objectives, their sequencing and time of realisation, milestones and deliverables as well as a development plan of the research group;
 - **Financial Plan** with elaborated financial resources required that need to be connected with specific objectives and activities from the Work Plan;
 - Copy of the PhD diploma and proof of current or future employment⁴ at the Institution.

3. Additional documents

- Certificates proving career breaks (if applicable);
- 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

⁴ For Applicants who are not employed at the Institution at the moment of submitting the application to the Call, the Institution should declare its intention of employing the Applicant for the duration of the project in the form Institutional Support Letter. Project financing cannot commence before the employment contract with the Institution has been signed.

Repeated Submission to HRZZ 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.

All documents listed in 1 and 2 are mandatory.

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.

Evaluation

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

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 "Installation Research Projects" (deadline: UIP-2020-02). First evaluation round will be based on the Extended Abstract Form as well as on the Work and Financial Plans.
3. Project proposals that obtained the highest marks 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 "Installation Research Projects" (deadline: 2020-02).
5. After the peer review, evaluation panel members shall evaluate complete project proposals according to additional criteria, as defined in the Evaluation Form C.
6. At the end of the evaluation, the panels will form a ranking list, based on which project proposals will be recommended for financing.

HRZZ may monitor progress of the project and the establishment of the research group, apart from regular reports, in the form of official visits to institutions hosting the projects. The key criterion for monitoring project progress and the resumption of financing is the performance of the work plan, establishment of a new research group and responsible utilization of funds approved for project implementation.

The project proposal evaluation criteria are available at the HRZZ website: www.hrzz.hr. The Principal Investigator should be familiar with and accept the principles for financing and implementing projects funded by HRZZ and obtaining all required permits before using the funds.

Contact

All enquiries related to the Call should be sent only **via the following e-mail address:** uspostavni@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.