



## Call for Proposals

# “Young Researchers' Career Development Project – Training of New Doctoral Students”

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Call Identifier: DOK-2021-02

Young Researchers' Career Development Programme

*This Call has been prepared in line with the regulations of the Croatian Science Foundation. By applying to this Call, you are accepting its terms. The terms relating to the masculine gender are considered neutral and refer to persons of both genders.*



## About the programme

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Future development of basic, applied and developmental research, transfer and application of new technologies as well as creating conditions for innovation and their application all depend on the quality of postgraduate training of young researchers, planning and developing their careers and capabilities of the Republic of Croatia to retain the best young scientists and encourage their employment, not only in the scientific and academic sectors, but also in the economic sector. The strategic goal of the Croatian Science Foundation (hereinafter: the Foundation) is to develop a comprehensive programme of funding career development of young researchers, from doctoral studies to post-doctoral specialisations in Croatia and abroad, as well as to actively encourage the mobility from academic to economic sector and vice versa.

### **Aim of the “Young researchers' career development project – training of doctoral students” Call for Proposals**

The Foundation announces this Call in order to enable active and prospective researchers dealing with internationally and/or nationally significant issues within their research projects to include young researchers willing to participate in the scientific research of a mentor with the aim of directing their career towards cutting-edge science. The overall goal is to train new doctoral students who will continue developing their career in competitive research and/or contribute to the development of new technologies in the economy.

In addition, this Call will build mentoring capacities within Croatian scientific organizations, encourage transfer, adoption and application of acquired knowledge as well as enhance the level of postgraduate education and scientific development of young researchers. The mentor must clearly explain the training and work methods, research tasks as well as the ways of application of acquired knowledge by the doctoral student. The mentor is responsible for scientific progress of the doctoral student and has to be an active researcher.

The eligible cost of the Call is the doctoral student's gross salary, with the main aim of completing a doctorate thesis and acquisition of knowledge on basic principles of scientific work and research.

The aim of the project is to support employment of young researchers at the early stage of career development (postgraduate level) within the system of science and higher education, which shall contribute to the improvement of young researchers' career development system.

### **Call goals**

- Maintaining a stable system of financing doctoral students (hereinafter: PhDs)
- Encourage training of new PhDs
- Increase number of young researchers participating in research projects
- Increase doctoral students' competences
- Strengthen mentoring capacities within Croatian research organisations

- Create new and improve existing knowledge as well as strengthen human resources essential for social development based on knowledge and scientific achievements.

## About the Call

**Call opening date: 12 January 2021**

**Call closing date: 16 February 2021 until 13:00 (CET)**

The Call is open to all scientific fields.

**Mentor:** scientist with internationally recognized achievements in science and/or technology.

**Estimated number of funded doctoral students:** 200

**Single amount of funding:** doctoral student's annual gross salary

**Project funding duration:** 4 years maximum

**Estimated beginning of financing:** mid-2021



## Call conditions

Applicants who are already being financed by other public sources may not apply for funding of those activities that are already being financed by public sources, i.e. double financing is not permitted. Funds granted under this Call shall not be considered as state aid.

### The candidate for mentor shall meet the following conditions:

- A scientist with an academic or an academic-research title who obtained his PhD at least two years prior to the Call deadline;
- A scientist who is permanently employed at an eligible organization (defined below);<sup>1</sup>
- A principal investigator or a team member of a research project financed by the Foundation, various EU (e.g. Horizon 2020) and other competitive international research projects, which will be the base for the scientific development of the doctoral student. The project must last at least 18 months after the application deadline;
- Scientific activities (publications, projects, patents, international cooperation);
- Mentorship experience;
- A detailed plan for the development of doctoral student's career in scientific research (hereinafter: Plan);
- A detailed plan for financing the doctoral student's education costs and scientific research work;

<sup>1</sup> Regular members of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts who are not permanently employed submit forms signed by the Head of the Academy.

- The Call is open to researchers from any scientific field;
- Candidates for mentors may apply for only one doctoral student per Call;
- Only one candidate from a single project may apply for one doctoral student per Call;
- Candidates who are currently not mentoring or are mentoring fewer doctoral students will have priority.

**The Organization shall meet the following conditions:**

- Eligible Organization: universities and their constituent faculties, public scientific institutes, scientific institutes, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts as well as other legal entities and their organizational units or other legal entities performing scientific activity and registered in the Register of Scientific Organizations of the Ministry of Science and Education, meeting the minimum conditions prescribed by the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing License for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-accreditation of Scientific Organizations and Content of License (OG 83/10) (hereinafter: Organization).
- The organization is obliged to provide actual and specific support to the mentor as well as to the doctoral student and secure pre-conditions for scientific development, which is confirmed by signing Form C - Organization Support.



## Call procedure

### ***Step 1 – Application and selection of mentor***

Applications of mentors are submitted **only** through the [Electronic Application and Assessment System](#) (EPP system), which is available on the Foundation's website. Mentors must be employed at public universities, public research institutes, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts or other organizations.

The mentor is responsible for scientific progress of the doctoral student and must be an active researcher.

The Foundation organizes the evaluation of mentors' applications and makes a decision on funding.

The list of approved mentors is published on the Foundation's website.

### ***Step 2 – Public call for recruitment of doctoral students***

Organizations are obliged to conduct a public call for the recruitment of doctoral students in accordance with the legal regulations and conditions established by the Foundation's Board. The selection of students should be consulted with the approved mentor. The public call must be released **no later than 2 months** after the notification on the approval of the mentor. **The Organization is obliged to deliver a written notice to the Foundation that the call is open.**

Organizations may set additional criteria for doctoral students, but only as an addition to the mandatory criteria established by the Foundation's Board.

Organizations that have released the public calls verify the eligibility of candidates and submit a proposal for the selection of PhDs to the Foundation along with the proof of eligibility, after which the Foundation shall issue its consent for employing the doctoral student.

### **Doctoral students shall meet the following mandatory criteria:**

- Finished appropriate graduate or integrated studies;
- Meets the criteria for the enrolment in doctoral studies;<sup>2</sup>
- Only candidates enrolling doctoral studies not later than the academic year 2021/2022 can apply;<sup>3</sup>
- If a candidate is already a successful doctoral student, funding may be granted for the remaining time, i.e. a maximum of four years minus the years of completed studies.
- Candidates whose doctoral studies were previously financed by the Foundation and terminated before completion are not eligible for this Call.

### **Additional criteria (not mandatory)**

- Previous honors, awards, etc. for excellence in studying and/or research work.
- Participation in scientific research, published papers, personal presentations at scientific conferences.

### **Step 3**

Upon signing the grant award contract between the Foundation, Organization and mentor, the Organization shall sign the employment contract with doctoral student. Doctoral student has to register in the Foundation's EPP system.



## **Funding**

The amount of single funding covers the total cost of the doctoral student's annual remuneration, which includes: gross salary, taxes, contributions and cost of public transportation to and from work as well as other payments and bonuses.

The work place of the doctoral student has to be in the head office or subsidiary offices of the Organization.

The Foundation transfers the funds to the account of the Organization, which calculates and pays the salary to the doctoral student. Organizations are obliged to keep records of doctoral students

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<sup>2</sup> Does not apply to candidates who have already enrolled in doctoral studies.

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in line with regular internal procedures valid for other employees paid from the Organization's own funds.



## Application and submission procedure

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Prior to registering, please read the **Guide for Applicants** as well as other forms and evaluation criteria. The documents referred to above can be found on the [Foundation's website](#).

Application must be submitted in **electronic form only**, through the [Electronic Application and Assessment System \(EPP\)](#) available on the Foundation's website.

Application must be written **in the Croatian language**.

Applications have to be completed and submitted via the EPP system within the Call deadline.

**Incomplete applications and applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.**

### Application documentation (mandatory)

#### 1. Form A – Mentor's application

- Section a – mentor's CV.
- Section b - mentor's five-year track-record.
- Section c – development plan for doctoral student's scientific and research career.
- Section d – a detailed plan for financing education and scientific research of the doctoral student.

#### 2. Form B – Detailed plan for doctoral student's career development.

#### 3. Form C – Organization Support

- Clearly outlined elements showing the intention of the Organization to secure adequate space, lab, equipment and other infrastructural requirements for scientific research of the doctoral student. If the Organization covers the costs of the doctoral study, it is necessary to specify the amount of the tuition fee.

### Additional documentation

- If the candidate for mentor is a team member on a project – the candidate must submit the evidence of his participation in the project, stating his status in the project, duration and budget of the project, which must be signed by the Principal Investigator and the Head of the organization where the project is being implemented. If the costs of the doctoral study are to be covered from the project budget, the amount of the tuition fee should be specified.

- If the doctoral study and/or research work of doctoral student is to be funded by the source other than the mentor's Organization – confirmation of payment of tuition and research work costs (with signature and stamp).



## Evaluation

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Proposals will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria stated in the Evaluation Form – mentor candidate (available on the Foundation's website).

### Evaluation scope:

#### 1. Scientific activity

- Scientific activity in the last five years (e.g. publications in relevant journals and books, coordinated or participated in projects, patents, international visibility and collaborations).

#### 2. Mentor excellence

- Status of a Principal Investigator or a team member on a research project lasting for at least 18 months after the Call deadline, in which the doctoral student would participate with his scientific research and which will secure funds for material costs of scientific research, education and dissemination costs.
- Previous success in managing PhDs' career development (number of successfully defended doctoral theses on time, the ratio of initiated and successfully completed mentorships with defended doctoral theses, etc.).
- Accomplishments and excellence of a candidate, which guarantee quality mentoring of the PhD, for candidates who did not mentor any young researchers before the Call.
- Number of PhDs that the candidate is currently mentoring.

#### 3. Plan for doctoral student's career development

- A detailed plan of the doctoral student's scientific development, with elaborated activities and measurable results to be implemented and achieved within the doctoral study as well as within the scientific research of the doctoral student during the funding period.
- Compatibility of the planned doctoral thesis with the doctoral study, the topic and field of the mentor's research project and the proposed scientific research of the doctoral student.
- Clear overview of activities to be implemented as well as risk identification and risk mitigation measures.
- Doctoral student has to devote 100% of his working hours to the scientific research related to his doctoral dissertation.
- Elaborated plan for financing doctoral studies, material costs of scientific research, dissemination and other costs, including the expected sources of funding.

#### 4. Organization Support

- Consent of the Head of the Organization to supporting the scientific development of the PhD, with clearly stated elements that show the readiness to secure adequate space and lab, equipment and other infrastructural requirements for the PhD's scientific research. If the Organization will be covering the cost of doctoral studies, the amount of the tuition fee should be specified.



## Project implementation and reporting

### Reports

- After **18 months** of employment, the mentor and PhD are obliged to submit a periodic report to the Foundation on the doctoral student's work, i.e. on the implementation of the Plan in accordance with the planned activities.
- The continuation of funding will be approved if the report is positively evaluated; if the report is negatively evaluated, funding will be suspended.
- The mentor and the doctoral student are obliged to submit the second periodic report after **36 months**, along with the evidence that the writing of the doctoral thesis is in its final stage.
- **The final report** has to be submitted within 30 days after project closure. The candidate shall submit the evidence of a successfully defended doctoral thesis.
- The mentor and the doctoral student are required to submit an additional report on the fulfilment of obligations with justifying documentation upon the Foundation's written request, regardless of the periodic reports' deadlines.

### Other obligations

- Compliance with the approved doctoral student's career development plan, financial obligations (e.g. covering costs of doctoral studies) and other contractual obligations.
- Delivering additional reports for the occasional control of the doctoral students' progress by the Foundation.
- Registration of published papers, conference papers, posters, etc., in the EPP system, with the financial contribution of the Foundation clearly stated.

### Failure to complete the Plan

- In case of objective difficulties in achieving the aims defined in the doctoral student's career development plan, the mentor and the doctoral student or the Organization are required to promptly inform the Foundation in written form.
- In case of negative evaluation of periodic reports, i.e. if the doctoral student's career development plan is not being implemented as foreseen in the contract, the mentor, the Organization and the doctoral student are responsible for the breach of contractual obligations.



- The Foundation shall hold the right to immediately terminate the Contract by giving written notice of termination to that effect if the evaluation has shown serious failures in the implementation of the Plan or in case of non-compliance with the contract or other written notices of the Foundation.



## Submission deadline

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Submission deadline is **February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 until 13:00 CET**

All enquiries related to the Call can be submitted **only via the following e-mail address** [doktorandi@hrzz.hr](mailto:doktorandi@hrzz.hr). Answers to the submitted questions will be published on the Foundation's web site twice a week under FAQ.