

Call for Proposals

“Research Projects – German–Croatian Bilateral Projects”

(Call identifier: IPDE-2026-12)

This Call for Proposals has been prepared in accordance with the general acts of the Croatian Science Foundation and the Multilateral Weave Agreement. By submitting an application under this Call, applicants accept the application of these acts. All terms used in this Call that have a gender-specific meaning shall be deemed to apply equally to all genders.

About the Call

The Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ) participates in the Weave funding instrument, the objective of which is to simplify the application and selection procedures for joint project proposals involving researchers from up to three European countries or regions by conducting a single evaluation procedure.

Within the framework of the Weave instrument and based on the Multilateral Weave Cooperation Agreement, the Croatian Science Foundation hereby launches a Call for Proposals for the co-funding of the Croatian part of bilateral research projects.

The general objective of research projects is the creation of new knowledge and the advancement of existing knowledge, and they represent a key instrument for supporting international cooperation. The ultimate goal is to establish a critical mass of research groups that are competitive at the international level. Bilateral research projects support basic research aimed at generating new knowledge and improving existing knowledge in a given field, with a focus on achieving a better understanding of the research subject.

The proposed research topic must be internationally recognised and/or nationally relevant, and the final beneficiary of the funding (the Principal Investigator) must demonstrate excellent previous scientific achievements.

This collaboration is implemented by the German Research Foundation (DFG), acting as the Lead Agency.

The German Principal Investigator, in cooperation with the Croatian Principal Investigator and the Croatian research group, prepares a joint project proposal in accordance with the DFG standard rules and instructions for Weave proposals and submits it to DFG. Project applications must include a joint scientific project description and clearly indicate the scientific contributions of both the Croatian and German researchers. Both parts of the research project must be closely linked and complementary, and the scientific contribution of each side must be clearly defined, visible, and transparent. A separate budget plan must be provided and justified for each component of the project, including funding requested from HRZZ by the Croatian Principal Investigator.

The Applicant Organisation (legal entity) employing the Croatian Principal Investigator shall submit to the Croatian Science Foundation a work plan of activities to be carried out by the Croatian research group and a financial plan relating exclusively to the activities of the Croatian research group along with the joint proposal submitted to the DFG.

More information on the implementation of the Multilateral Weave Agreement between HRZZ and other funding agencies is available at: <https://hrzz.hr/programi/medunarodna-suradnja/>.

Objectives of the Call:

General objective is to enhance international research and development cooperation and to integrate Croatian scientists (researchers) into joint German–Croatian research projects.

Specific objectives are:

- generation of new knowledge with the ultimate aim of strengthening the Croatian economy and societal well-being;
- fostering networking among researchers and recognised research groups addressing internationally and/or nationally relevant topics, led by distinguished scientists with internationally recognised achievements;
- support for research groups capable of competing at the international level and for scientists able to mentor a new generation of early-career researchers;
- development of Croatian scientific and research potential.

Call Summary

Call opening date: 19 February 2026

Application deadline: submission by the Applicant Organisation with the Croatian research group by **31 December 2026** at 17:00 (CET) via the EPP system

Research fields: all scientific fields

Principal Investigator: a distinguished scientist with internationally recognised achievements in science and/or technology in the field of the proposed project

Project type: basic research conducted by a recognised research group

Funding recommendation: project proposals ranked and proposed for funding within the top 20% in the respective competition at DFG will be recommended for funding

Project duration: up to 3 years

Indicative project start date: late 2026/early 2027

Applicant Organisation

Eligible Applicant Organisations (legal entities):

- higher education institutions,
- public or private research institutes
other research-oriented institutions employing at least five PhD holders under employment contracts exceeding one year.

Principal Investigators

The final beneficiary of the funding – the Principal Investigator – is the lead Croatian researcher, i.e. the head of the Croatian research group, who:

- is responsible for the scientific research and overall project management;
- is an active researcher (holding a PhD, with experience in project management, an established and active research group, relevant publications and/or patents in the research field), with internationally recognised research results and proven successful mentoring of early-career researchers;
- is employed on a permanent basis at a research organisation eligible as an Applicant Organisation or beneficiary.
- Each bilateral project with the same research group may be submitted only once per year and to only one funding agency. **Researchers who are planned to be employed are not considered members of a research group.**

A full member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU) may be a Principal Investigator even if not permanently employed.

A Principal Investigator may participate in only one project proposal per call and must have the formal support of the Applicant Organisation.

At the time of application, the Principal Investigator may hold an active role in a maximum of two HRZZ-funded projects, either as the Principal Investigator of one project and a collaborator or co-Principal Investigator on another, or as a collaborator or co-Principal Investigator on two projects. Consequently, an eligible applicant may hold only one active role at the time of application. Projects ending on 30 September 2026 are not considered active.

Co-Principal Investigators are heads of Croatian research groups in bilateral programmes (IPCH, IPS, IPCZ), MAPS, and ERA-Net programmes.

Eligibility Conditions and Application Procedure

A bilateral research project involves a partner research group and a Croatian research group led by the Croatian Principal Investigator. The German Principal Investigator, in cooperation with the Croatian partner, prepares a joint project proposal in accordance with the Lead Agency's Call and submits it to DFG.

The project proposal must comply with the standard rules and instructions of the DFG for Weave proposals. The application procedure is as follows:

1. The joint project is submitted by the Principal Investigator from the Lead Agency country to DFG, including all documentation required under the DFG standard rules and instructions for Weave proposals;

2. The Applicant Organisation simultaneously submits the Croatian part of the proposal to the Croatian Science Foundation (seven days upon submission to the Lead Agency at the latest).
3. The application to HRZZ consists of: the Administrative Form, the DFG Application Form (joint proposal) with the research plan description, the Work Plan, the Financial Plan, the Research Data Management Plan, the Organisation Support Form, and other required documentation. The Work Plan includes activities carried out by the Croatian research group only, while the Financial Plan includes exclusively the costs to be funded by HRZZ.
4. The evaluation procedure is conducted by DFG, while HRZZ performs an administrative eligibility check of Croatian applicants.
5. Upon completion of the evaluation, DFG informs HRZZ of the outcome of the review and evaluation and whether a project proposal falls within the top 20% of the respective competition at DFG.

Funding

Project proposals ranked within the top 20% in the respective competition at DFG will be recommended for funding.

Funding for the Croatian part of the project: EUR 60,000.00 to EUR 200,000.00

The requested funding must be evenly distributed over all project years.

Project duration: up to three years.

A Grant Agreement will be concluded with the beneficiary within three months of the funding decision.

Eligible costs¹:

- research costs
- equipment and equipment maintenance costs (up to EUR 59,999.00)
- dissemination, training, and collaboration costs (up to EUR 15,000.00);
- open access publication costs (up to EUR 15,000.00);
- indirect costs, eligible up to a maximum of 15% of the total requested funding, provided that they are directly related to project activities, cannot be assigned to other cost categories, and are adequately justified and specified.

¹ Detailed instructions on the application content and guidelines on how to complete the application are provided in the document *Guidelines for Applicants for Weave Calls where the Croatian Science Foundation acts as a Partner Organisation in 2026*.

Application Content and Submission to HRZZ²

All application documentation submitted to HRZZ must be in English. The Applicant Organisation is responsible for ensuring consistency between the Croatian part of the proposal and the joint proposal submitted to DFG. HRZZ bears no responsibility for any discrepancies.

In addition to the joint submission to DFG, the Croatian part of the proposal must be submitted to HRZZ through the following documents:

1. Administrative Form – must include handwritten signatures of the Principal Investigator and the legal representative of the Applicant Organisation, as well as the official stamp;
2. DFG Application Form with the joint research plan description;
3. Work Plan – outlining results, objectives, timelines, and collaborators (Croatian research group only);
4. Financial Plan – detailing requested funding linked to objectives and activities (Croatian research group only);
5. Research Data Management Plan – describing data storage, handling, and post-project data use;
6. Organisation Support Form – a document of up to two pages detailing institutional support, signed and stamped;
7. Signed Letter of Intent confirming participation in the proposed project for all collaborators, i.e. members of the Croatian research group who are not employed by the project-hosting organisation – the Letter of Intent for collaborators from Croatia must be signed by both the head of the organisation employing the collaborator and the collaborator; the Letter of Intent for collaborators from abroad must be signed solely by the collaborator.

HRZZ will conduct an administrative eligibility check. Incomplete applications will be subject to a request for clarification or supplementation. Applications that fail to meet requirements after supplementation or miss the deadline will not proceed further.

Applicants are advised to consult the Guidelines for Applicants for Weave Calls where CSF acts as a Partner Agency in 2026, available at www.hrzz.hr.

Applications must be submitted exclusively in electronic form via the Electronic Project Proposal Submission System (EPP) at <https://epp.hrzz.hr/>.

²Detailed instructions on the application content and guidelines on how to complete the application are provided in the document *Guidelines for Applicants for Weave Calls where the Croatian Science Foundation acts as a Partner Organisation in 2026.*

Application Deadline

The deadline for submission to HRZZ for Croatian applicants is 31 December 2026 at 17:00 (CET). Late submissions will not be accepted.

Contact

All enquiries related to this Call must be submitted exclusively by email to: international@hrzz.hr.