

## Call for Proposals

# “Research Projects – Swiss-Croatian bilateral projects”

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*(Call identifier: IPCH-2025-04)*

*This Call has been prepared in line with the general regulations of the Croatian Science Foundation and the Multilateral Lead Agency cooperation agreement between the Swiss National Foundation (SNSF) and the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ). By applying to this Call you agree to the implementation of thereof. The terms used in the masculine gender are neutral and shall refer to persons of both genders.*

## About the Call

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The Croatian Science Foundation participates in the Weave instrument, whose aim is to simplify the procedures for applying and selecting joint project proposals in which researchers from up to three European countries or regions participate in one evaluation.

As per the Multilateral Lead Agency Cooperation Agreement signed between the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ), Croatian Science Foundation is launching a Call for co-funding of the Croatian part of Swiss-Croatian research projects.

The general aim of research projects is creating new and enhancing existing knowledge. They are the principal support instrument to international cooperation. The ultimate aim is creating a critical mass of research groups that will be competitive at the international level. The programme "Research projects – Swiss-Croatian bilateral projects" finances *fundamental* research which creates new and enhances existing knowledge about a particular area and is aimed at better understanding of the research subject.

The proposed topic must be internationally recognisable and/or nationally relevant, and the Principal Investigator must have an excellent track record.

The Call funds the Croatian part of Swiss-Croatian research projects which have received positive evaluation marks in the international peer review process conducted by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) as the Lead agency and which have been accepted for funding under the condition that formal criteria from both partner organisations have been met.

This call is implemented by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) as the *Lead Agency*.

The Swiss Principal Investigator, together with their Croatian partner and Croatian research group, prepares a joint project proposal in line with the SNSF Call and submits it to the SNSF Call. Project proposals contain a joint scientific description of the project and indicate the scientific contribution of Swiss and Croatian researchers. Swiss and Croatian parts of the research project need to be closely connected and complementary and the scientific contribution from both sides needs to be clearly defined, visible and transparent.

The Croatian Principal Investigator, together with its Croatian team, should submit to HRZZ, in addition to the joint proposal submitted to SNSF, a work plan of activities to be conducted by the Croatian research group and the financial plan for these activities.

## Call objectives

The general objective is to improve international development and research cooperation and to include Croatian scientists (researchers) into joint Swiss- Croatian research projects.

The specific objectives:

- to create new knowledge with the overall aim of strengthening 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 international level and scientists who are capable of mentoring a new generation of young researchers,
- to develop scientific and research potentials in Croatia.

### About the Call:

**Call opening date:** 24 February 2025

**Call closing date:** joint application is to be submitted to SNSF by **1 April 2025**; the Croatian applicant needs to submit the Croatian part of the proposal by **8 October 2025** until 12:00 (CET) through the EPP system.

**The Call is open to all scientific fields.**

**Principal Investigator:** distinguished scientist with internationally recognised achievements in science and/ or technology within the research field of the proposed project with the Swiss partner

**Project:** fundamental research conducted by a distinguished research group

**Project proposals ranked in the top 20% of the current SNSF call will be recommended for funding.**

**Project funding duration:** up to 4 years

**Estimated beginning of the project:** end-2025

## Applicant

**Applicant to the Call is a legal entity, more specifically:**

- higher education institution,
- scientific institute,
- other research-oriented organization that has at least five employees with a PhD degree who have been employed at the organization for at least one year.

## End Beneficiary (Principal Investigator)

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The End Beneficiary is the Principal Investigator (PI) from Croatia, i.e. the head of the Croatian research group, who should meet the following conditions:

- 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 research organization that meets the requirements for the Applicant (Beneficiary),
- A PI may submit a bilateral proposal with the same research group only once in a single year, i.e. only to one Lead Agency. **Researchers that are to be recruited through the project are not considered research group members.**

Regular members of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts may be an End Beneficiary, even if they are not permanently employed.

The End Beneficiary (PI) may be listed on only one project proposal per Call and must have institutional support.

**The End Beneficiary - Principal Investigator (PI) may have the status of a PI and/or team member on a maximum two HRZZ projects - as PI of one project and team member or co-PI on another project or as a team member or co-PI on two projects. In other words, applicants to this Call may only have one additional role on an ongoing HRZZ-funded project. This does not include the role of PI and team members in HRZZ projects ending on 30 September 2025.**

**Co-PIs on projects are PIs of Croatian research groups in bilateral research projects (IPCH, IPS, PCZ) and ERA-NET projects.**

**PIs and the same research group can submit only one bilateral project proposal in the same year, i.e. only to one agency.**

## Terms and Conditions of the Call

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A joint Swiss- Croatian research project will consist of a Swiss and a Croatian research group led by a Principal Investigator. The Swiss Principal Investigator, in collaboration with their Croatian partner, will prepare a joint project proposal in line with the Swiss Call and submit it to the SNSF Call.

The application procedure is as follows:

1. A joint project proposal by the Swiss- Croatian research group is submitted by the Swiss Principal Investigator to the relevant agency, i.e. to the SNSF with complete documentation as requested in the SNSF Call.
2. At the same time, the Croatian Principal Investigator submits the **Croatian part** of the application to the Croatian Science Foundation.
3. Application to HRZZ consists of Administrative Form, Work Plan, Financial Plan, Institutional Support Letter, and additional documents. Work Plan contains activities of the joint project which are conducted by the Croatian research group only while the Financial Plan contains only the costs to be funded by HRZZ.
4. The evaluation process for this Call will be conducted by SNSF while HRZZ will take part in the evaluation of the eligibility of the applicants and end beneficiaries.
5. After the evaluation conducted under its internal rules, SNSF will deliver to HRZZ the ranking list of projects proposed for financing.

## Funding

**Project proposals ranked in the top 20% of the current SNSF call will be recommended for funding.**

**Maximum project funds:** between 60,000.00 and 200,000.00 EUR.

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

The duration of the funded projects shall be four years.

HRZZ shall conclude a grant agreement with the Beneficiary (legal entity) within three months after the adoption of the funding decision.

### **Types of eligible expenses<sup>1</sup>:**

- research costs.
- personnel costs (employment of postdoctoral researchers)<sup>2</sup>,
- equipment purchases and equipment maintenance costs (up to 80,000 EUR)
- dissemination, training, and cooperation costs (up to 15,000 EUR)
- Open access costs (up to 15,000 EUR)
- indirect costs - maximum 10% of total funds requested, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Please find a more detailed explanation of eligible and ineligible costs in the Guidelines for Applicants to the Croatian Science Foundation's Weave Calls in 2025.

<sup>2</sup> When employing postdoctoral students, Principal Investigators and host institutions shall abide by national legislation and regulations regarding eligibility of salary costs determined by HRZZ, available at the Foundation's website.

## Application content and submission process<sup>3</sup>

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All documentation related to the application shall be submitted **in English**. The Applicant shall be responsible for the equivalence of the project proposal submitted to the SNSF by the Principal Investigator in Switzerland and HRZZ will not be responsible for any discrepancies.

The Croatian Principal Investigator shall submit the project proposal to the Croatian Science Foundation via the following documents:

1. Administrative Form – generated from the EPP system; it should bear the original signatures of the Principal Investigator and the Head of the Legal Entity and the Legal Entity's stamp.
2. Research proposal – pdf document submitted to SNSF.
3. Work Plan – it should contain an overview of the results connected with objectives, their sequencing and time of realisation and team members who will conduct them **(for the Croatian research group only)**.
4. Financial Plan – contains elaborated financial resources required that need to be connected with specific objectives and activities from the Work Plan **(for the Croatian research group only)**.
5. Research Data Management Plan (RDMP) – describing how the End Beneficiary will store data generated during the research and what will happen to it after the project is completed. Sharing research data increases visibility, publication citations, and collaboration among researchers.
6. 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 Principal Investigator and the Head of the Legal Entity and bearing the Institution's stamp.
7. 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 a team member from Croatia shall be signed by the Head of their respective institution and the team member himself, while the Letter of Intent for a team member from abroad shall be signed by the team member alone)

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 and the proposal meets the Call terms and conditions.

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 referred to evaluation procedure.

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<sup>3</sup> 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 Weave Calls in 2025*.

Before submitting the project proposal, Applicants and PIs should study the **Guidelines for Applicants to the Croatian Science Foundation's Weave Calls in 2025**. The Guidelines are available at the Foundation's website [www.hrzz.hr](http://www.hrzz.hr).

Application to the Call consists of submitting a project proposal on the provided 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/>.

**IMPORTANT:** To start their application, Applicants should select the option **WEAVE-2024**.

## Project proposal submission deadline

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**Deadline for submitting project proposals to SNSF is 1 April 2025, while the deadline for Croatian applicants is 8 April 2025 until 12:00 (CET). Project proposals submitted after this deadline will not be accepted so all applicants are invited to submit their applications in a timely manner.**

## Contact

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All enquiries related to the Call should be sent only via the following e-mail address: [international@hrzz.hr](mailto:international@hrzz.hr).