

Call for Proposals

“Research Projects – Swiss-Croatian bilateral projects”

(Call identifier: IPCH-2025-10)

This Call has been prepared in accordance with the general regulations of the Croatian Science Foundation and the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement between the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ). By applying to this Call, applicants agree to abide by its terms. The terms used in the masculine gender herein are neutral and refer to persons of all genders.

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 a single evaluation procedure.

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 the Call for co-funding 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 objective is creating a critical mass of research groups who 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 End Beneficiary (PI) must have an excellent track record.

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

Swiss Principal Investigator, together with the Croatian partner and Croatian research group, prepares a joint project proposal in line with the SNSF Call and submits it to the SNSF. Project proposals shall 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 partner (**the Applicant**), in addition to the joint research proposal that he submits together with the Swiss researcher to the SNSF, submits to HRZZ the work plan of the activities to be carried out by the Croatian research group and the financial plan related to the activities of the Croatian research group.

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 aims:

- To generate new knowledge that strengthens Croatian economy and enhances societal welfare,
- To promote 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 develop internationally competitive research groups capable of mentoring young researchers to develop scientific and research potentials in Croatia,
- To strengthen Croatia's scientific and research potential.

Call in brief:

Call opening date: 7 July 2025

Call closing date: The Croatian Applicant needs to submit the Croatian part of the proposal until **8 October 2025** at 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 and proposed for financing among top 20% of all submitted proposals to SNSF will be recommended for funding.

Project funding duration: 4 years

Estimated beginning of the project: June 2026

The Applicant

Eligible Applicants (organisations) are:

- higher education institutions,
- scientific institutes,
- other research-oriented institutions with at least five PhD holders employed for a period exceeding one year.

End Beneficiaries – Principal Investigators

The End Beneficiary is a principal investigator from Croatia, i.e. the head of the Croatian research group, i.e.:

- 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,
- permanently employed at a research organization that meets the requirements for the host organization, i.e., the Applicant,
- **each End beneficiary (PI) may submit only one project proposal per Call in a year to one agency. Researchers that will be employed on the project cannot be considered as members of the research group at the time of the application.**

Fellows of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts may submit project proposals as End Beneficiaries.

The End Beneficiary-Principal Investigator may have the status of a Principal Investigator (PI) and/or team member on a maximum two HRZZ projects: as a PI of one project and team member or co-PI on another project or as a team member or co-PI on two projects. Therefore, at the time of application, an eligible PI may hold only one active role on HRZZ projects. Active roles do not include the role of project leader or collaborator on HRZZ projects scheduled to conclude by March 31, 2026. PIs of Croatian research groups on projects in bilateral programmes (IPS, IPCH, IPCZ) and ERA-NET projects are considered Co-PIs for the purpose of this Call.

Terms and Conditions of the Call

The Swiss Principal Investigator together with the Croatian partner will prepare a joint project proposal in line with the SNSF Call and submit this joint proposal to SNSF.

The project proposal must be compliant with the SNSF Call Terms and Conditions. Submission 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 Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) with complete documentation as requested in the SNSF Call.
2. At the same time, the Croatian Applicant submits an application to the Croatian Science Foundation.
3. Application to HRZZ consists of the following documents: Administrative Form, submitted SNSF Application Form with the research plan description, Work Plan, Financial Plan, Research Data

Management Plan, Institutional Support Letter and additional documents. Work Plan contains activities of the joint project which are conducted by the Croatian research group 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 principal investigators.
5. After the evaluation under the internal rules, SNSF will deliver to HRZZ the ranking list of projects proposed for financing that are in the first 20% of all proposals submitted to SNSF.

Funding

The proposals ranked within the top 20% of all the submitted proposals to SNSF will be recommended for funding.

Maximum project funding for Croatian part of the project: between 60,000.00 EUR and 200,000.00 EUR.

The duration of the funded projects is four years.

Financing agreement shall be concluded with the Applicant (project beneficiary) within three months after the financing decision.

Types of eligible expenses¹:

- research costs
- personnel costs (postdoctoral researchers)²
- equipment purchase and equipment maintenance costs (up to 59,999 euro)
- dissemination, training and cooperation costs (up to 15,000 euro)
- Open access costs (up to 15,000 euro)
- indirect costs - maximum 15% 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.

¹ Please find a more detailed explanation of eligible and ineligible costs in the Guidelines for Applicants to the Croatian Science Foundation calls when HRZZ is a partner agency in 2025.

² When employing postdoctoral students, principal investigators and host institutions shall abide by the national legislations and regulations regarding eligibility of the costs of salaries determined by HRZZ, available at the Foundation's website.

Application content and submission process³

All documentation related to the application shall be submitted in English to HRZZ. 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 Applicant 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 End Beneficiary-Principal Investigator and the Head of Applicant (organisation) and the Applicant's stamp.
2. Application to SNSF with the research plan description
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. The Research Data Management Plan - describes how the End Beneficiary - Principal Investigator 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. The form will not be evaluated in this Call.
6. Institutional Support Letter- document on a maximum of 2 pages, containing a detailed and complete description of the support provided by the Applicant (Host organisation), signed by the End Beneficiary-Principal investigator and the Head of the Applicant and bearing the Applicant's stamp.
7. Signed Letters of Intent for participation in the proposed project for the Croatian 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)

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 additional documentation is necessary, HRZZ will notify the Principal Investigator of the required additional documentation in writing. In case the project proposal does not meet the administrative check criteria even after submitting the additional documents or the additional documents have not been delivered in the available period, the project proposal will not be sent to evaluation.

³ 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 Weave calls when HRZZ is a partner agency.

Before submitting the project proposal, it is necessary to study the **Guidelines for Applicants to Weave Calls when HRZZ is a partner agency in 2025**. The Guidelines (in Croatian) are available at the Foundation's website www.hrzz.hr.

Application to the Call consists of sending the 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/>.

Note to applicants: to start the application in the EPP system, the applicant should select the Call **WEAVE-2024**.

Project proposal submission deadline

Deadline for submitting project proposals to HRZZ for Croatian applicants is 8 October 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

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