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Call for Proposals

“Mobility Programme – Inbound Mobility of Senior Research Assistants”

Call identifier: MOBDOL-2023-12

NOTE: This is an unofficial translation to be used by foreign Visiting Researchers solely for information purposes. In case of significant discrepancies between the English and Croatian versions of the text, the Croatian version shall be considered relevant.

1. Introduction to the Call

The Croatian Science Foundation (hereinafter: HRZZ) is the Beneficiary of funds provided in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (hereinafter: NPOO) for the implementation of the Mobility Programme as part of Investment C3.2.R2-I1 “Developing a stimulating career advancement model and conducting leading scientific research in STEM and ICT”.

This Call for Proposals “Mobility Programme – Inbound Mobility of Senior Research Assistants” (hereinafter: Call) sets the framework and conditions for awarding support in combination with the Guidelines for Applicants to the Call and the documents listed in Section 6 of the Call.

2. Information about the Mobility Programme

The aim of the Mobility Programme is to improve research, development and innovation capacities of researchers by: a) providing support for short-term trainings of junior research assistants at research organizations abroad and by encouraging their internationalization; b) providing support to young researchers holding doctoral degrees to use the research visits to research institutions abroad to acquire the desired skills and international experience to develop a successful career; c) attracting talented young researchers with doctoral degrees to come from abroad to Croatia.

International mobility is a requirement for training researchers in general, while international collaboration is directly related to top-notch science and innovation. The aim of the different sub-programmes within the Mobility Programme is to provide researchers with an opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and international experience for a successful career, be it in the public or business sector.

The Mobility Programme will contribute to greater transfer of knowledge and methodologies, development of skills and creation of international networks. In the long term, the Programme will contribute to attracting more EU and international funding into the research and development sector in Croatia as well as publishing research works with greater impact.

The Mobility Programme consists of three sub-programmes:

1. Outbound mobility of junior research assistants
2. Outbound mobility of senior research assistants
3. Inbound mobility of senior research assistants

3. Information about the sub-programme “Inbound Mobility of Senior Research Assistants”

HRZZ is launching this Call to connect research performing organizations in Croatia with young researchers abroad who wish to take an active part in research activities in Croatia. The ultimate objective is to create a pool of young scientists who will pursue their academic career in Croatia.

The Call “Mobility Programme – Inbound Mobility of Senior Research Assistants” provides funding for the stay of a researcher from abroad in Croatia with the primary objective of undergoing

researcher training by taking part in research activities of a project implemented at the Applying Organization.

The objective of the Inbound Mobility Sub-programme is to raise competitiveness and stimulate greater internationalization of the Croatian research and development (hereinafter: R&D) system by attracting talented young researchers and integrating them in the Croatian R&D system. The new support will contribute to greater internationalization of the Croatian R&D system through collaboration with foreign scientists and research groups.

Support for inbound mobility of senior research assistants will enable researchers from abroad to spend some time at public research organizations in Croatia.

In the long term, this Sub-programme will enable foreign researchers to integrate into the Croatian R&D sector and/or continue their collaboration with Croatian institutions.

In addition, the Sub-programme is expected to contribute to a larger number of scientific papers published in high-quality scientific journals as well as to more funds attracted from European and other international funding sources.

Call in brief:

Call publication date: 1 September 2023

Submission deadline: 1 December 2023 at 13.00 CEST

The Call is open to all scientific fields

Duration of mobility period: minimum 12 months, maximum 24 months. Research visits granted through the present Call must commence by **31 December 2024** at the latest. Visiting Researchers should finish their visit by **1 May 2026** at the latest.

Eligible countries: EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries (full list available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-auratom_en.pdf) and Switzerland

Eligible costs: the grant awarded through the Call shall be in the form of a scholarship to be used for researcher training of young researchers at a Croatian research organization. The scholarship shall be disbursed as a fixed rate in the amount of 3,625 EUR per month.

Budget of Sub-programme: 1,827,000 EUR

Duration of proposal evaluation process: no more than five months



Call terminology:

Applicant/Intermediate Beneficiary – public research performing organization in Croatia that wishes to host a young researcher from abroad for the purpose of providing him/her with researcher training (Host Organization).

End Beneficiary/Project Holder – young researcher from abroad who obtained his/her doctoral degree not more than 7 years before the Call deadline and who will be trained at the Host Organization (Visiting Researcher).

Project – long-term research stay of the Visiting Researcher from abroad in Croatia for the purpose of undergoing researcher training. The Project must be implemented for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 2 years.

Host Mentor – senior scientist at Host Organization who shall be responsible for the researcher training of the Visiting Researcher.

4. Terms and conditions of the Call

Eligible applicants (Host Organizations):

- public research organizations established in line with the provisions of the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (Official Gazette No. 119/22) that meet the definition of “research and knowledge-dissemination organisation” in accordance with the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014, Article 2(83) (which is to be supported by the Applicant’s Statute or other legal act(s) clearly defining the Applicant’s activity/ies),
- a single Applicant may host an unlimited number of researchers,
- applicants shall not be eligible to apply to this Call if they do not meet all the requirements as listed in Form E – Organization’s Declaration on verity of information, avoidance of double financing and meeting the pre-conditions for taking part in the award procedure,
- the Applicant should provide the End Beneficiary (Visiting Researcher) with real and specific support and ensure the appropriate environment for researcher training, which shall be guaranteed by the Host Organization’s Head by signing Form A.

In the Application Form, the Applying Organization should clearly explain the form of training, research methods and tasks of the Visiting Researcher, as well as their role in the implementation of project tasks within the research project of the Host Mentor.

The non-refundable grant awarded to organizations that meet the definition of “research and knowledge-dissemination organisations” defined in Article 2(83) of Regulation 651/2014 do not represent state aid, hence in such circumstances the intensity of support for eligible costs can reach 100% of eligible costs of the project, taking into account the maximum amount of the grant that can be awarded to an individual project.

A research and knowledge-dissemination organisation (“research organizations”) shall not receive state aid if it does not meet the conditions for enterprises. These conditions are not dependant on its legal status, but rather on whether it had been established pursuant to public or private law or



its economic nature, i.e. on whether it aims to make a profit or not. The deciding factor for an entity to be disqualified as entrepreneur is the fact that the economic activities which consist of offering products or services at a certain market do not exceed more than 20% of the total annual capacities of the research organization.

Eligible Host Mentors:

- scientists elected to a research or research-teaching title who obtained their doctoral degree not less than 5 years before the Call deadline,
- shall be employed at the Host Organization for an indefinite period,
- shall be Principal Investigator or team member of scientific projects funded by HRZZ, various EU (Horizon 2020/Europa etc.) and other competitive research projects within which the training of the Visiting Researcher shall take place. The project must be ongoing throughout the mobility period.
- shall be an active researcher (publications, projects, international collaboration, patents).

The Applying Organization may nominate a single Host Mentor only once. Only one researcher from a single research project may apply as Host Mentor. The Host Mentor's fee shall not be covered through this Call.

Eligible End Beneficiaries:

- early-career researchers who obtained their doctoral degree not more than 7¹ years before the Call deadline,
- proof of scientific activity from the time of enrolment into doctoral studies onwards,
- national of EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country (full list available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf) and Switzerland,
- did not have permanent or habitual residence and was not employed in Croatia in the two years preceding the Call deadline,
- a single Visiting Researcher may be financed only once through this Sub-programme.

¹ HRZZ will take into account young researchers who obtained their doctoral degree more than 7 years ago if they submit proof of maternity leave(s) or long-term illness. In such cases, this period will be reduced from the duration of the eligibility period. In case of maternity leave, the period that passed from the doctoral degree award date will be extended by 16 months for each child born after the award. In case of paternity leave, the period that passed from the doctoral degree award date will be extended for the amount of time spent using paternity leave for each child born after the award. In case of long-term illness or clinical treatment, the period that passed from the doctoral degree award date will be extended for the amount of time spent in treatment after the award. For applicants who hold a doctoral degree and are medical specialists, the eligibility period will be extended for the amount of time spent undergoing specialist training. In all of the cases above, the total amount of time passed from the doctoral degree award date may not be extended to more than 11 years.

Eligible research disciplines

A project proposal may be submitted in any scientific discipline pursuant to the [Regulation on scientific and artistic areas, disciplines and fields](#) (Official Gazzete No. 118/09, 82/12, 32/13 i 34/16, 56/22).

5. Funding

This Sub-programme shall provide support in the form of scholarships for researcher training in the amount of **3,625 EUR** per month. The only eligible costs are those related to the long-term visit of the Visiting Researcher to the Host Organization in Croatia (Applying Organization). The duration of the visit shall be a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months.

The Host Organization shall sign a Grant Agreement with HRZZ. The full amount of the scholarship shall be disbursed to the account of the Host Organization, which shall be obliged to make the funds available to the Visiting Researcher (End Beneficiary) during their researcher training in Croatia.

The Visiting Researcher shall be responsible for ensuring that the funding provided by HRZZ does not violate any obligations they might have toward their current employer and/or other legal entities. If the End Beneficiary is employed at an organization abroad, they may retain their salary if their employment contract provides for this possibility.

To account for the scholarship amount, after the researcher training has ended, the Applying Organization shall submit a confirmation document stating the duration of the Visiting Researcher's stay, which should be signed by the Applying Organization's Head.

6. Content of the application and how to submit the application

Mandatory documents:

- Form A – Organization's Application Form (in Croatian)
- Form B – Host Mentor's CV (in Croatian)
- Form C – Visiting Researcher/End Beneficiary's CV (in English)
- Form D – Visiting Researcher's Detailed Training Plan (in English)
- Form E – Applying Organization's Declaration on verity of information, avoidance of double financing and meeting the pre-conditions for taking part in the award procedure (in Croatian)
- Form F – Applying Organization's Declaration that the proposal is in accordance with the "do no significant harm" principle (in Croatian)
- Statute or other legal act clearly defining the Applicant's activity/ies
- Certificate of award of doctoral title to Visiting Researcher
- Letter of recommendation for Visiting Researcher (by current or former supervisor, senior team member, PI, head of Unit, etc.) (in English)

The application shall be submitted in electronic format through HRZZ's EPP system.



The application must include all mandatory documents completed in proper form. Instructions on completing the forms are available in the Guidelines for Applicants.

When submitting the application, the Applying Organization and end beneficiaries must complete the initial survey which shall be available online from the Call opening date. The initial survey for Applying Organizations is available [here](#), while Visiting Researchers should complete the survey available [here](#). The answers collected through the survey will be used for evaluating the Call.

By applying to the Call, the applicants shall consent that the entire documents submitted to the Call and the information related to the evaluation may be used for the purpose of evaluating the results and impact of the Programme, regardless of whether they received the grant or not. Their consent shall be provided by signing Form E. Access to this information will enable evaluation of impact, which shall be based on comparison between a test and control group, which includes beneficiaries and similar applicants, i.e. subjects that did not benefit from the Programme. The competent authority will ensure that the data remains confident during the evaluation of Programme results and impact.

7. Evaluation of applications

HRZZ's professional services will conduct an administrative check of all applications submitted before the deadline, in line with the Administrative Check Protocol. In order to meet all administrative conditions of the Call, an application must meet all criteria listed in the Protocol.

Upon completion of the administrative check, all applicants who failed to meet any of the criteria shall be notified thereof.

The Board of the Croatian Science Foundation shall appoint the **Scientific Expert Committee for the Mobility Programme**, which shall consist of a minimum of 7 Croatian members, taking into account the distribution of disciplines. The Committee will appoint three independent evaluators for each proposal that will conduct peer review of applications that passed the administrative check. Based on the evaluation, the Committee will propose a ranking list of project proposals based on the average grade of each proposal. The final decision on funding shall be given by the Board of the Croatian Science Foundation.

Evaluation criteria:

- 1) The quality of researcher training will be evaluated through the following criteria:
 - a. *Relevance and originality of the proposed training*
 - b. *Feasibility of the research training plan*
- 2) The scientific/innovation and management potential of the researcher will be evaluated through the following criteria:
 - a. *Previous career of the Visiting Researcher (taking into account years of research experience)*
 - b. *Potential for professional development and future excellence of the Visiting Researcher*



3) The conditions provided by the Host Organization will be evaluated through the following criteria:

- a. *Secured support of the Applying Organization for implementing the proposed training (equipment, staff, co-financing the project)*
- b. *Relevance of the Applying Organization in the subject area*
- c. *Track record of the Host Mentor*

Each criterion will be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5. The maximum number of points is 35.

In case more than one candidate scores an equal number of points, while the available funds may be used to fund only one or some of these candidates, the Committee will conduct additional ranking of applications with an equal number of points by using the following criteria:

1. The number of points scored on Criterion 1. Quality of the researcher training
2. The number of points scored on Criterion 2. Scientific-innovation potential of the Applicant
3. The number of points scored on Criterion 3.3. Track record of the Host Mentor

The list of applicants and end beneficiaries that would receive the mobility grant will be published on HRZZ's website.

8. Implementation of the Researcher's Training Plan and reporting

The financing period may start only after HRZZ and Applying Organization have signed the Grant Agreement. The funds required for the implementation of the project will be disbursed to the Organization's account before the arrival of the Visiting Researcher to the researcher training following the delivery of proof of planned training (signed Grant Agreement). All costs pertaining to the period before or after the contracted financing period will not be eligible. If the Visiting Researcher fails to start their research visit in the contracted period, HRZZ shall retain the right to cancel the Agreement and terminate financing.

Pursuant to the Act on Foreign Nationals (OG 130/11, 74/13, 69/17, 46/18), foreign citizens are required to regulate their stay in Croatia and register in the Registry of Scientists maintained by the Ministry of Science and Education.

The first periodic report on the implementation of the research training plan shall be submitted halfway through the research visit². If the periodic report receives a negative evaluation, financing will be terminated in line with the provisions of the Grant Agreement and the Visiting Researcher will be obliged to terminate their training in Croatia through this Programme.

At the end of the researcher training, a final narrative report shall be submitted, containing an overview of the implemented activities during the research visit period. The periodic and final report shall be submitted to HRZZ in electronic format within 15 days after the end date of the subject reporting periods.

² E.g. If the length of the research visit is 12 months, the periodic report shall be submitted after 6 months.



9. Evaluation of results and impact of Programme

In order to evaluate the results and impact of the Mobility Programme, the applicants shall consent to granting access to information pertaining to the project proposal. HRZZ will ensure that the information remains confidential and accessible only to the persons taking part in the evaluation of results and impact of Programme. HRZZ will implement post-implementation surveys for collecting data from researchers and host organizations for the purpose of evaluating results and impact of the Programme and monitoring indicators, in line with the deadlines defined at the Programme level.

If the competent bodies decide to evaluate the entire Programme, in the years after the implementation of the projects, post-implementation surveys will be conducted aimed at collecting information about the results that the researchers achieved relative to the state of affairs when submitting the proposal. By applying to this Call, the young researcher shall be obliged to take part in additional surveys if the competent bodies decide to undertake them, and to consent for the provided data to be used for the purpose of evaluating impact, regardless of whether they received the grant or not. Their consent shall be provided by signing Form D. The competent body will make sure that the potential future surveys are no additional administrative burden for the respondents.

10. Contact

All interested applicants should send their enquiries to the email address mobilnost_NPOO@hrzz.hr. Answers to all questions received through the email above will be published on HRZZ's website on a weekly basis. When submitting a question, please indicate in the subject line or body the call to which the question is related (MOBDOL).