



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
Project Preparation Advance (PPA)
for preparation of Second Science and Technology Project
Loan Nr. P4640 -HR

Unity through Knowledge Fund

Announces

Call for Proposals

**RESEARCH COOPERABILITY PROGRAM
Crossing Borders Grant (1B)**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Croatia has received Project Preparation Advance (PPA) from the World Bank for preparation of Second Science and Technology Project (STP II). The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) is implementation agency for PPA and through the PPA and STP II has the objectives to (i) improve the capacity of Croatia's R&D and innovation institutions to implement Europe 2020 Strategy for increased investments in R&D through efficient absorption of EU funds, and (ii) develop a pipeline of public and private R&D projects, including research groups, that could qualify for financing through EU structural funds.

Unity through Knowledge Fund (UKF) will use the PPA funds for preparation of proposed Second Science and Technology Project (STP II), to finance the operational activities, launch new calls for proposals and for the evaluation procedure.

Financial resources for UKF programs will be available when Proposed Second Science and Technology Project becomes effective.

2. ABOUT UNITY THROUGH KNOWLEDGE FUND

Under the motto Connectivity – Cooperability – Creativity, the Unity through Knowledge Fund has mission to unite scientific and professional potential in Croatia and Diaspora in the development of the knowledge based society.

In order to achieve this task, UKF strives towards the following goals: fostering internationally competitive research, fostering research that provides new



values to Croatian economy and supporting projects that develop research infrastructure. This *Call for Proposals* together with *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Application Form 2012*, *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Curriculum Vitae Form 2012*, *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Instructions for Applicants 2012*, *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Baseline Survey 2012* (<http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=244>) and *UKF Guidelines and Procedures - Preparation Advance of Proposed Second Science and Technology Project (STP II) 2012* (<http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=7>), set out the terms and conditions on which the Grant “Crossing Borders” shall be awarded.

For every project proposal recommended for financing, the applicant will be obliged, during the negotiations, to prove that their project is in accordance with *Environmental Management Framework*, which is the condition for financing. Environmental Management Framework, guidelines which set the environmental screening categories and *Environmental Screening Form (Annex A – Environmental Management Framework)*, which will be required to submit to the Fund upon request are also available on the Fund's webpage (<http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=244>).

3. ABOUT RESEARCH COOPERABILITY PROGRAM

Research Cooperability Program is a research support program that finances medium-scale collaborative research projects in Croatia that fulfil the conditions outlined in the Fund's goals, with involvement of Croatian scientific and professional Diaspora.

The program goal is to attract promising research projects to Croatian companies and institutions together with their international/private financing, their accompanying knowledge, technology and potential research results.

Total amount foreseen for the Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant equals 22,5 million HRK. Total amount of funds awarded in this Call for proposals in the year 2013 will depend on the quality of the project proposals.

4. ABOUT CROSSING BORDERS GRANT

The aims of the Crossing Borders Grant are to support outstanding Croatian scientists and professionals working and living abroad (Diaspora) in establishing scientific cooperation with local scientists (Croatian and foreign scientists working and living in Croatia), as well as to foster Croatian institutions



and enterprises to use potentials of Croatian scientific and professional Diaspora.

The grant should enable transfer of knowledge and attract investments to Croatian organization through cooperation between Diaspora and local scientists. Eventually, it should facilitate the return of Croatian scientists and professionals from abroad through networking with scientific colleagues from Croatia.

5. INSTRUMENTS THAT CAN BE FINANCED AND DURATION OF THE PROJECTS

The grant may include application of the following instruments (see the *UKF Guidelines and Procedures - Preparation Advance of Proposed Second Science and Technology Project (STP II) 2012*):

- research project's costs (consumables and other costs)
- human resources in S&T (costs for newly employed early-stage researchers (PhD students) and post-doc researchers (salaries))
- long-term visits (travel costs and allowances)
- short-term visits and conferences (travel costs and allowances)
- specific equipment (durables)
- supporting consulting and expertise
- overhead costs/Leading organization

Proposed research projects are to last for a minimum period of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months and a single grant cannot be lower than 750.000 HRK or higher than 1.500.000 HRK.

6. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF HOW FUND WILL FINANCE PARTICULAR PROJECTS

General principle of how Fund will finance a project is that the project is cofinanced by the Fund under the condition that minimum of 20% of the amount requested from UKF is secured from other sources.

Since the Republic of Croatia must establish State aid control in line with European Union praxa, Croatian Competition Agency (CCA) which governs the compliance with the State aid rules set out by the Croatian legislative framework, must be notified of the State aids awarded within the programs of the Fund.

State aids for research, development and innovation within the Research



Cooperability Program will be awarded by the Fund according to the Decision on Authorization issued by the Croatian Competition Agency, Class: UP/I 430-01/12-02/008, Reg.No.: 580-09-01/89-2012-005 from October 25th 2012 (<http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=7>).

In accordance with this Decision on Authorization, if the Leading organization is a big, middle or small enterprise Fund will co finance projects depending on the project research category (basic, applied or developmental research), in the maximum percentages (the aid intensity), as follows:

- 80% of eligible expenditures for basic research
- 50% of eligible expenditures for applied research
- 25% of eligible expenditures for developmental research;

while eligible costs for applied and developmental research may be increased for:

- 10% for middle enterprises
- 20% for small enterprises;

and additional 15% bonus may be added to the maximum of 80% eligible costs under the following conditions:

(i) the project involves effective collaboration between at least two SMEs which are independent of each other and the following conditions are fulfilled:

- no single SME must bear more than 70 % of the eligible costs of the collaboration project,
- the project must involve collaboration with at least one SME or be cross-border, that is to say, the applied and development activities are carried out in at least two different Member States, or

(ii) the project involves effective collaboration between SME and a research organisation which is not a Leading organization, if following conditions are fulfilled:

- the research organisation bears at least 10 % of the eligible project costs,
- the research organisation has the right to publish the results of the research projects insofar as they stem from research implemented by that organisation, or



(iii) only in case of applied research, if the results of the project are widely disseminated through technical and scientific conferences or published in scientific or technical journals or in open access repositories (databases where raw research data can be accessed by anyone), or through free or open source software.

For the purposes of points (i) and (ii) subcontracting is not considered to be effective collaboration.

State aids cannot be awarded to the enterprises in difficulty.

7. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

WHO CAN APPLY?

- a. The outstanding experienced Croatian or foreign researchers and experts living and working in Croatia who want to initiate and establish cooperation with an outstanding researcher or expert of Croatian nationality or origin who has built career and works abroad
- b. The outstanding experienced researchers and experts of Croatian nationality or origin living abroad, who want to initiate and establish cooperation with the partners from Croatia
- c. Main applicant and co-applicant who work in Croatia must have employment contracts at their institutions for the whole time of project duration.

Who cannot apply - researchers and experts who have already been granted the projects as Project leaders and Co-leaders within the Research Cooperability Program can not apply as main applicants and co-applicants.

The Grant is intended for researchers from both industrial and academic sectors. Main applicants and co-applicants should have previous experience as research project leaders and should demonstrate the ability to lead research and team.

Until they receive final decision on their project proposal submitted for Research Cooperability Program, main applicant and co-applicant listed in a project proposal shall not apply for other UKF's programs as main applicant or co-applicant.

WHICH PROJECT PROPOSALS ARE ELIGIBLE? Same project proposal which has not been financed within the Fund's programs so far can be submitted twice at the most to Calls for proposal within Research Cooperability Program.

WHICH RESEARCH AREAS ARE ELIGIBLE? Proposed research in all scientific



disciplines; natural, biomedical, technical, biotechnical, social sciences and humanities is eligible. Proposed research project should clearly demonstrate the benefit to Croatian science, economy, environment and/or society.

WHICH LEGAL ENTITY SHOULD BE INVOLVED? The grant will be awarded to a Leading organization (administering organization) which can be a research organization (public and private scientific institutes, universities, faculties and other higher education institutions) or big, small and medium enterprises.

The grant will be awarded to a legal entity with the head office in the Republic of Croatia, which is responsible of receiving and managing financial means. Apart from a Leading organization other eligible organizations which can be involved in the project proposal are other public and private institutes, universities, faculties as well as big, small and medium enterprises. **The project proposal should contain following letters of commitment:**

1. Commitment of Leading organization to administer the proposed research project, what includes: administration of funds, project employees and facilities, engagement of their current employees, providing other support according to proposed plan. The Leading organizations should accept all responsibilities originating from and connected to the proposed research project. The letter must confirm that the main applicant/co-applicant will be employed for the whole duration of the project. The main applicant and co-applicant are responsible for proposing and agreeing suitable arrangements with a Leading organization.
2. Commitment of a Partner organization (other legal entity involved in project than the Leading Organization) to support the proposed research project including hosting and supporting the Croatian researchers according to the project plan. The involved organizations should accept all responsibilities originating from and connected to the proposed research project. The main applicant and the co-applicant are responsible for proposing and agreeing suitable arrangements with the all participating organizations.
3. Commitment of the main applicant's employing organization (in the case it is different than a Leading organization) to support his/her engagement on the proposed project in Croatia and the letter must confirm that the main applicant will be employed for the duration of the project. Additionally, the main applicant that is employee of Partner organization is responsible for agreements of terms of his/hers engagement at a Leading organization.
4. Letter(s) of financial commitment for matching funding in the amount of at least 20% of the amount requested from the UKF.



5. Two recommendation letters for the main applicant .

WHAT ARE THE BUDGET REQUIREMENTS? At the time of application, **matching funding has to be secured** and shall amount to at least 20% of the amount requested from the UKF. At least 5% of matching funding of the amount requested from UKF shall be in form of financial contributions (cash contributions). Any existing or planned financial support from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Croatian Science Foundation as well as other sources of financing from the State Budget which are intended for science and technology development are not eligible as matching funding for this Grant. Other 15% of matching funding of the amount requested from UKF may be in form of in kind contributions (goods or services) needed for research. Please note that salaries of researchers employed at the Leading organization are not an allowable in-kind contribution. The total Fund's subsidy for a project requested over total period cannot be lower than 750.000 HRK or higher than 1.500.000 HRK.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All project proposals are evaluated against the fixed set of criteria stated bellow. The proposal should address the points stated in these criteria with measurable and provable information. Anonymous, internationally recognized and independent experts will evaluate all eligible proposals. The UKF Secretariat and Steering Committee will assure that evaluators are in neither direct nor in indirect conflict of interest. Steering Committee is assessing the contribution of the project to the Fund's goals. At the end of the evaluation procedure the projects for financing are proposed according to the final marks given by the evaluators and the mark given by Steering Committee. The evaluation procedure is described in detail in the *UKF Guidelines and Procedures - Preparation Advance of Proposed Second Science and Technology Project (STP II) 2012*.

The scientific excellence is a prerequisite for awarding the grant. The contribution to the Fund's goals – international competitiveness and potential to provide a new value to Croatian society – is a cornerstone of the assessment.

Specific assessment criteria for this Grant are described below and they are to be assessed by the evaluators.

- i. SCIENTIFIC/TECHNOLOGICAL QUALITY OF THE PROJECT ASSESSED BY ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - a. Significance and originality of the research proposed
 - b. Clarity and measurability of the goals and prospect for achieving them



- c. Feasibility of the project and suitability of the methods – including work plan, time plan and budget
- ii. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT IN CREATING ADDED VALUES FOR CROATIAN SOCIETY AND ECONOMY ASSESSED BY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - a. Potential for creating research result important for Croatian science, economy, environment and society
 - b. Prospective innovations, patents, commercial applications, new or improved products or processes or environmental benefit
 - c. Potential of strengthening Croatian research capability
- iii. RESEARCH/MANAGERIAL QUALITY OF THE PROJECT LEADER (AND THE CO-LEADER), INCLUDING THEIR LEADERSHIP ABILITY TO UNDERTAKE GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH, ASSESSED BY ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - a. Necessary expertise, previous success and overall career development
 - b. Key publications
 - c. Personal letters of recommendations
- iv. PROJECT'S FUTURE POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE FURTHER CO-FINANCING AND GAIN FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSED BY ONE OF FOLLOWING:
 - a. Prospect for attaining additional co-financing from EU/international funds
 - b. Prospect for attaining additional co-financing from non-public and private sources

In a case big numbers of proposals are received to a Call, the evaluation procedure may be carried out in two rounds while the first round of evaluation does not necessarily have to be peer-review evaluation.

In calculating the project mark criteria I and III have more importance over criteria II and IV.

9. GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Project proposal should contain all filled-in forms and letters and there are additional guidelines for filling-in the forms in accompanying *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Instructions for Applicants 2012* (<http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=244>).

To be formally eligible the project proposal must contain:

- forms:

1. *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Application Form*



2012

2. *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Application Form 2012-B.Financial plan*
3. *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Curriculum Vitae Form 2012 - for the main applicant and co-applicant*
4. *Research Cooperability Program, Crossing Borders Grant - Baseline Survey 2012*

(Documents 1-4 must be submitted on the official forms as available on the Fund's website or on request.); and

- letters:

5. Letters of commitment and support of the Leading organization and Partner organization(s)
6. Letter(s) of financial commitment
7. Two recommendation letters for the main applicant (if sent by post, the date of sending the letter of recommendation (as read on the envelope) which has to be within the proposal deadline will be considered)

The project application form must be filled-in in English and signed by project applicant and co-applicant and the responsible person(s) of their organization(s). All other accompanying forms and letters submitted within the proposal must also be in English language and signed by the authorized persons. The signed project proposal (all forms and letters) must be electronically submitted no later than **Friday, 1st of February 2013 until midnight** using the UKF web application (<http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=39>).

The applicants will receive a notice on successful submittal of proposal by e-mail.

By submitting this project proposal applicant accepts to provide the information on the project to the Fund when requested and to be available for subsequent updates within the limits of reasonability for the purpose of evaluating the impact of the program.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

Letters rejecting or accepting proposals, with statements of opinion, will be sent to all applicants within 5 months after the application deadline (excluding the periods from 15 July and 31 August and from 20 December and 7 January, according to Croatian law). Evaluation results will be made available within applicants' accounts at the UKF web site. The accepted proposals are subject of



further negotiations and final approval, according to the *UKF Guidelines and Procedures - Preparation Advance of Proposed Second Science and Technology Project (STP II) 2012*.

Letters with final decisions and contracts on financing will be sent to the applicants. The summaries of successful proposals will be published on the UKF's website, www.ukf.hr. Note that the submission of project proposal does not establish any form of legal claim or responsibility of Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. All decisions of the UKF Steering Committee are final and are not subject to further claims or revisions.

Any inquiries should be addressed to the contact persons at the Unity through Knowledge Fund: e-mail: office@ukf.hr; phone: +385 1 23 52 685; address: UKF, Planinska 1, HR-10000 Zagreb, Croatia.