



Thematic HRZZ Call for Scientific Research Proposals

**Infectious Diseases Caused by Corona Viruses and
the Social and Educational Aspects of the
Pandemic**

Call identifier: IP-CORONA-2020-04

This Call has been prepared in line with the regulations of the Croatian Science Foundation. By applying to this Call, you are accepting its terms. The terms relating to the masculine gender are considered neutral and refer to persons of both genders.

About the Call IP-CORONA-2020-04

In these exceptionally demanding circumstances caused by COVID-19, the (10)(2a) as part of its mission, will support research groups that are able to solve the greatest research challenges in order to save human lives and protect health and well-being of the population of the (10)(2a)

This thematic Call will fund fundamental and applied research that creates new and improves existing knowledge on infectious diseases caused by corona viruses as well as research that explores social aspects of the pandemic and the effect of the pandemic on the education system.

Funded Projects should be carried out by strong research groups at (10)(2a) research institutions. Principal Investigators should be scientists acknowledged on a national and/or international level. Collaboration of national and/or international research groups, pooling of equipment and other research capacities is encouraged to achieve scientific discoveries about the coronaviruses, SARS-CoV-2 virus, the new infectious disease COVID-19 and their wider social impact.

Research topics are aligned with the recommendations of the World Health Organization for researching COVID-19, and the existing research of (10)(2a) scientists in virology, viral immunology and infectology, crisis management, mental health and well-being as well as distance teaching and learning.

About the Call:

Call objectives: Better understanding of biology and pathogenesis of the coronaviruses, more specifically the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 infectious disease, crisis management during and after the pandemics as well as the organization and implementation of distance learning.

Call publication date: 30 March 2020

Submission deadline: 20 April 2020 until 13.00 (CET)

Budget: around (10)(2a) funding per project from (10)(2a) to (10)(2a) for research topics 1 and 2, and from (10)(2a) to (10)(2a) for research topics 3 and 4

Project funding duration: 18 months

Approximate project start date: June 2020

Research Topics

1. Immune response and development of novel diagnostic approaches to COVID-19

- 1.1. Existing diagnostic methods for COVID-19 are still not sufficiently developed and more sensitive, specific, precise, simpler, cheaper and faster methods are urgently needed.
- 1.2. In order to understand viral mutations and their significance for immune control as well as the tendency to accumulate mutations, including specific variations for this micro-region, sequencing of the viral genome needs to be performed.
- 1.3. Research of the immune response, pathogenesis as well as clinical outcomes of SARS-CoV-2 infections.

2. Development of new vaccines, treatments as well as drugs and agents for the COVID-19 inhibition

- 2.1. Developing novel antiviral agents against SARS-CoV-2 and designing drugs for COVID-19 therapy.
- 2.2. Investigating protective capacity of different immuno-therapeutic antiviral agents against SARS-CoV-2 in experimental animal models.
- 2.3. Developing experimental vaccines and vaccine vectors for COVID-19 and studying their protective effect.

3. Social aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic

- 3.1. Psychosocial consequences of emergency measures in the control of the COVID-19 pandemic, resilience and risk factors for mental health and well-being of the general and vulnerable population.
- 3.2. Crisis communication related to the COVID-19 pandemic for alleviating fear, stereotyping and uncertainty, strengthening responsible individual and group behaviour and trust in public authorities.

4. Educational aspects of the pandemic

- 4.1. Effects of changing paradigms of learning and evaluating processes, successful models for achieving distance-learning outcomes in primary, secondary and higher education. Technological prerequisites and development of human resources for successful organisation and implementation of remote teaching.
- 4.2. Use of big data, learning analytics and especially data from virtual environments for advancing teaching and as the grounds for informed, strategic decision-making in education.

Evaluation

Basic funding criteria:

- Scientific quality of the project proposal and the research team and the potential for making a significant contribution to the research problem in the research topic within the limited time period of 18 months.

Evaluation process:

- International peer review (2 reviews per project proposal) and final ranking that will be conducted by a panel of (10)(2a) scientists.

Principal Investigator

- Scientists responsible for implementing the Project and managing the research group.
- A scientist employed at a public university, public research institute in the (10)(2a) and at other legal research entities¹ as well as full members of the (10)(2a) (10)(2a)

Funding

The amount of funding per project ranges from (10)(2a) to (10)(2a) for research topics 1 and 2, and from (10)(2a) to (10)(2a) for research topics 3 and 4, for 18 months of implementation.

(10)(2a) will disburse the funds to the bank account of the research institution at which the Principal Investigator is employed and which submits the project proposal.

Type of eligible expenses:

- Research costs,
- Equipment costs and equipment maintenance costs,
- Dissemination and collaboration costs (up to (10)(2a)).
- Indirect costs – eligible in the maximum amount of 5% of the total amount of required funds.

¹ Institutions registered in the Register of Scientific Organisations kept by the Ministry of Science and Education that meet the minimum conditions prescribed by the Regulation on the Conditions for Issuing a Permit for Performing Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-accreditation of Scientific Organisations and the Content of the Permit (10)(2a). The PI may submit a project proposal only in the field(s) for which the Institution of his employment is accredited and in which the project will be implemented.

Submitting Application

PI should submit the project proposal on the attached application forms **in electronic format only** by sending them to the following e-mail address [\(10\)\(2a\)](mailto:jp-covid@)

Documentation:

- **Application Form** - summary, project proposal (research objective, methodology, expected results), PI's track record, research group.
- **Financial Plan**
- **Institutional Support** - electronic statement of the head of the Institution declaring support to the project
- **Letter of Intent** - electronic statements of research group members confirming participation in the project, if not employed in institution where the project will be implemented.

Ethical approval will be delivered on [\(10\)\(2a\)](#) request, if applicable.

Submission Deadline

Submission deadline is April 20th, 2020 until 13:00 CET

All questions related to the Call should be addressed to the email address [\(10\)\(2a\)](mailto:jp-covid@) or phone [\(10\)\(2a\)](#). Answers to the submitted questions will be published on the [\(10\)\(2a\)](#) web site twice a week under FAQ.