



CROATIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

[Project Evaluation Manual]

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Introduction

This document elaborates and describes the evaluation process of project proposals submitted to Public Calls of the Croatian Science Foundation (hereinafter referred to as „Foundation“). Candidates submitting the projects and reviewers will find in this manual guidelines and information on steps taken during the evaluation of project proposals.

Efficient and independent scientific evaluation which enables the determination of scientific quality and priority of project proposals is at the basis of all Foundation’s activities. The process of selecting and funding the best projects depends on three stakeholders: applicants, reviewers and the Foundation.

The Foundation sets clear criteria for the submission and evaluation of projects, a quick and transparent evaluation process and decision-making and technical assistance in the submission procedure. Candidates must be clear and precise when describing how they match the conditions of the Call, and submit complete project documentation. Reviewers, experienced Croatian and international scientists, set aside their time and knowledge in order to study the project documentation and provide an objective and honest assessment of project proposals.

Evaluation process carried out by the Foundation is essentially competitive and includes comparison of projects submitted for each Call, taking into account conditions of the Call, Foundation's priorities determined in the Strategic Plan, scientific quality and feasibility of the project.

This document contains the following expressions:

Before making a decision on funding	Applicant – a person submitting the project proposal to Calls Project proposal – submission for a Call, directed to evaluation. There are: project proposal outlines and full proposals
After making a decision on funding	Project Leader – leader of the project approved for funding Project – project proposal approved for funding
Types of evaluation	Peer review – project proposal is evaluated by reviewers who do not discuss their rating with others Panel review – group evaluation of project proposals carried out by reviewers which includes a discussion and harmonisation before reaching a conclusion Assessment – project proposals are evaluated by Scientific Committees Evaluation result – result of evaluation in written form (numeric rating and expert’s comments)
Evaluation stakeholders	Reviewer – a person who is, due to his/her scientific competence and/or wider relevant knowledge, qualified to evaluate Panel – a temporary body founded by the SC and entrusted with tasks, composed of reviewers Scientific Committee (in short SC) – a body responsible for conducting evaluations Board of the Foundation (in short The Board) – a body which controls the work of the Foundation and makes all decisions on project funding Programme Coordinator - the Foundation’s employee responsible for administrative handling of project proposals, projects and technical implementation of evaluations

Basic financial instruments

Basic financial instruments used by the Foundation are listed in the following table.

Table 1: Foundation's basic financial instruments

Title	Instrument description
Research Projects	Funding of individual scientific research projects
Collaborative Research Programmes	Funding of programmes which involve the cooperation of at least three research groups from at least two research facilities with legal personalities
Development of research careers	Funding of projects related to the development of different stages of research careers (for e.g. doctoral and postdoctoral scholarships, installation grants etc.)
Programmes of national interest	Funding projects of exceptional national interest (determined by the Foundation's Strategic plan)
Encouragement of cooperation with the economy and cross-sector cooperation	Funding of projects which encourage cooperation and transfer of knowledge among research facilities, private and/or other public sectors
Encouragement of networking	Encouraging networking of scientists and research groups
Centres of Excellence	Gathering of large and strong research groups for the creation of regional Centres of Excellence

Basic principles of evaluation

The evaluation of project proposals is based on the following principles:

QUALITY

Projects funded by the Foundation must be of an extremely high scientific, technical and managerial quality in the context of the Call, but also of the strategic goals and the Foundation's mission.

TRANSPARENCY

All principles and procedures relating to the preparation of project proposals and evaluation must be explained in detail, made public and available in due time to all interested candidates. All project proposals are evaluated on the basis of the same, consistent and clear criteria. Results of the evaluation are available to the candidate after the decision has been made so that the feedback could be used for improvement of future project submissions.

EQUAL TREATMENT

All project proposals in the evaluation process are treated and related equally.

EFFICIENCY AND SPEED

In order to ensure a timely feedback on the results of the Call, the evaluation will be carried out quickly and efficiently, maintaining a high level of quality and respecting the legal framework and Normative Acts of the Foundation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All persons involved in the processing of project proposals and their evaluation are obligated to honour the confidentiality of all materials obtained from the Foundation as well as the identity of reviewers. All members of the Scientific Committee sign a data confidentiality statement and all reviewers a statement of confidentiality and conflict of interest¹.

Persons involved in the evaluation must not publicly disclose which project proposals they evaluated or when, nor the names of candidates submitting the project for a Foundation Call. Experts involved in the evaluation may publicly state that they were reviewers and receive an equivalent certificate from the Foundation, but they must not state for which projects or Calls. The Foundation does not publish the identity or lists of reviewers, and can only publish general data/statistics.

¹ Attachment 1

Information from the project proposal must not be used by the reviewer for any other purpose other than to evaluate projects for the Foundation. Data from the evaluation shall be made available by the Foundation only to Foundation's Bodies which are involved in the evaluation or the funding decision-making process, and shall not use them for any other purpose or make them available to third parties.

Reviewers² must be familiar with the Foundation's practice according to which a complete estimate text is delivered to the candidate submitting the project, while protecting the identity of reviewers. All information from the project documentation, estimates and names of proposed reviewers as well as other information associated with project proposal processing, evaluation and decision-making are confidential and Scientific Committee members and Foundation employees must not disclose them publicly or make them available to persons who are not directly involved in this procedure.

ETHICAL ISSUES

The Foundation emphasises the importance of respecting ethical principles of all persons involved in the processing of project proposals and their evaluation. In this context it is important to isolate and emphasise three elements:

- Reviewers, members of the Scientific Committee and Board of the Foundation are obligated to abide by the ethical principles in all aspects of their activities,
- Reviewers and Scientific Committee members are obligated to report and consider all ethical issues which occur in their work and the evaluation process,
- Reviewers and Scientific Committee and Board members will request additional opinions if they detect possible ethical issues.

The ethical principles are at the care of the Board of the Foundation.

EVALUATION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY PROPOSALS

Considering that more and more research exceeds the boundaries of its main discipline with its content and methods, it is necessary to pay special attention to them in the evaluation process.

In order to ensure that such project proposals are recognised and evaluated appropriately, applicants shall mark them as mono-disciplinary or interdisciplinary.

The processing of interdisciplinary project proposals will include all Scientific Committees responsible for scientific areas which the project proposal encompasses. In the selection of experts for evaluation of interdisciplinary projects, Scientific Committees apply additional criteria.

² All terms for person reference used in this document should be understood as semantically gender-neutral.

Submitting projects for Foundation Calls

Awarding of Foundation funds is carried out according to the prescribed procedure which can be one or two-staged. All steps of the two-stage procedure are shown in the Table number 2.

Table number 2. Steps of the two-stage evaluation procedure

The Call	Goals and priorities of the programme, means, deadline and conditions of submitting project proposals are defined
Submission of project proposal outline	Electronic and printed submission in Croatian and English; up to 2 pages of text and applicants' CV
Verification of compliance with the Call's theme	The SC verifies the compliance of project proposal outlines with the Call's theme and Foundation priorities
Submission of the full project proposal	Only projects that fit the Call's theme and Foundation priorities; official forms, electronic and printed submission
Administrative verification	Project proposals are submitted for evaluation or rejected
Selection of reviewers	Scientific Committees propose independent Croatian and international reviewers ; Programme Coordinators select reviewers
Evaluation	Peer review and/or panel review
Ranking	Ranking of project proposals according to the peer review results; making of lists of project proposals which enter the second evaluation round
Applicants' responses	Possibility of responding to evaluation results (only for projects not proceeding to the second evaluation round)
Evaluation and ranking of project proposals	The SC-s do a final evaluation of project proposals and rank them according to their grades
Decision on funding	Signing a funding contract, defining rights and obligations
Periodic supervision	Periodic monitoring and project supervision (reports, audits, official visits)
Continued funding	Depending on the outcome of the monitoring, a decision on continuation or discontinuation funding
Final report and audit	Evaluation of the final report, audit of spent funds

THE PUBLIC CALL

The Foundation funds projects exclusively through Public Calls. Terms of all Calls are determined by the Board. The text of the Call includes well-determined goals and priorities of the programme under which the Call is announced, means, deadline and conditions for submitting project applications and methods and criteria of their evaluation. The Call's text may also include a description of the project monitoring and Project Leader's obligations.

SUBMISSION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

As a rule, the Foundation's Calls are applied for through official forms, in electronic and printed form. Ways of submission are prescribed by each programme's Call. For some programmes (for e.g. research projects and collaborative programmes) the Foundation will be applying the two-stage evaluation procedure in which the project proposal outline is submitted first, after which a certain number of applicants will be called to submit the full project proposal.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT PROPOSAL OUTLINES

All project proposal outlines are evaluated by the members of the Scientific Committee (at least 2 members per proposal) in accordance with **Form I³**. The form is used for evaluation of project proposal outlines by verifying their compliance with the Call and Foundation priorities as well as basic criteria of the Call. Based on the results of this evaluation, applicants will be called to submit the full project proposal or be notified that their proposal does not fit in with the Call's theme and Foundation priorities at the moment.

FULL PROJECT PROPOSALS AND ADMINISTRATIVE VERIFICATION

Project proposals are received and opened by the Foundation's expert services and are grouped according to Calls and scientific fields. After being received, project proposals are reviewed administratively. The Programme Coordinator reviews the submission documentation and carries out the appropriate protocol for the administrative review of project proposals. Administrative review protocols are completed individually for each project proposal, and they serve to determine if the proposal was sent on time, complete (if it contains all documentation prescribed by the Call) and in accordance with the basic conditions of the Call. Completed protocols are kept in the archive. After the administrative verification of submission, the Coordinator makes a list of project proposals which are timely, complete and in accordance with conditions of the Call, as well as a list of project proposals which did not meet the terms of administrative verification. All lists are forwarded to Scientific Committees which decide on directing project proposals for the evaluation process.

SELECTION OF REVIEWERS

All members of the Foundation Scientific Committees as well as independent Croatian and international reviewers take part in the evaluation process. The selection of the reviewers is under jurisdiction of the Scientific Committee.

EVALUATION

Depending on the number and scientific fields of project proposals and conditions of individual Calls, project proposals may be directed to peer review, panel review or a combination of both. The evaluation can be carried out electronically or during live sessions. The evaluation is based on predefined criteria which can be general (applicable to all programmes) and specific (applicable only to a specific programme being evaluated). Evaluation criteria for each individual programme are prescribed through evaluation forms. The results of the project proposal evaluation (ratings and comments) will be referred to the applicant.

³ An example of the form is in attachment 2.

FIRST RANKING OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

In the two-stage procedure Scientific Committees rank project proposals based on the results of the peer review and make a list of project proposals entering the second evaluation round. Applicants entering the second round shall be called to submit their responses to the evaluation results.

APPLICANTS' RESPONSES

The time limit for submitting responses is one week. The response cannot contain additions or changes to the project proposal but only replies to specific questions posed by reviewers regarding vagueness and other technical issues.

EVALUATION AND SECOND RANKING OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

After receiving applicants' responses, the Scientific Committees carry out the final evaluation⁴ (according to **Form III**⁵) and rank project proposals by their grades (rankings). Interviews with applicants and/or official visits to applicants' institutions can be organised as part of the assessment procedure.

DECISION OF THE BOARD OF THE FOUNDATION

Following the order established by the ranking, the Board decides on funding project proposals. All applicants are informed on the Board's decision, and a funding contract is signed with applicants of projects accepted for funding which determines rights and obligations of the Foundation and the applicants.

PROJECT MONITORING

For all funded projects, the Foundation organises systematic monitoring and supervision of project activities, spending of funds and compliance with other contractual obligations.

For three-year projects periodic annual reports on progress and financial operations are submitted, and after a year and a half of working on the project an audit of spent funds must be carried out. As part of the project monitoring procedure, the Foundation also applies the method of official visit⁶.

Upon the completion of the project all project leaders must submit the final and the audit report to the Foundation. All reports are submitted on prescribed forms, and are evaluated by Scientific Committee members or the Evaluation Commission. Following the evaluation results of periodic reports the Board decides on further funding of the project.

⁴ Described in the Means of evaluation section.

⁵ Example of the final evaluation form is in attachment 5.

⁶ Described in the Evaluation process section.

RELEASE OF CALL RESULTS TO THE PUBLIC

Board's decisions on project funding are sent in written form to the Project Leader and, if necessary, to the Head of the institution or other parties if so required. Publicly, on websites, reports or publications of the Foundation, basic information on funded projects are published. The Foundation publishes statistics on acceptance and number of submissions for Calls at least once a year. Detailed information on project proposals which have not been accepted by the Foundation for funding is not published.

The Foundation can make the basic information on funded projects available to other funds and institutions which finance scientific research.

Reviewers

The evaluation process involves Foundation Scientific Committee's members and independent Croatian and international reviewers.

Members of the SC-s select reviewers and seek the best match between their expertise and the project proposal theme. Criteria for the selection of experts may vary depending on the type of the programme and evaluation, and special attention is paid to the selection of experts for the evaluation of interdisciplinary project proposals. Basic criteria for the selection of reviewers are the appropriateness of competence for project proposal assessment (determined on the basis of previous scientific work and achievements), and competence in the field of the programme under which the Call was announced as well as their independence (no conflict of interest).

Scientific expertise is crucial in the selection of experts for peer review. However, when selecting experts for panel review it is not necessary for the expert to be proficient in each individual subject, but that the members of the panel as a group have the necessary competence for evaluation and ranking of project proposals.

Guided by the prescribed criteria and strictly obeying the Foundation's rules for the evasion of conflict of interest, Scientific Committees make a list of reviewers and/or members of Scientific Committees and forward it to the Programme Coordinators. Scientific Committee members may also determine the order in which proposed reviewers should be contacted. When proposing reviewers, Scientific Committees may use the Foundation's Reviewers Database as well as proposals from the project applicants themselves.

For peer review, the Foundation must ensure that each project submission receives at least 3 independent reviews, 2 of which are international, and one domestic. This rule may be waived only when justified, for example when assessing project proposals in the field of Croatian language all 3 experts can be domestic, or international, when there is a conflict of interest among domestic experts.

For the panel review, it must be ensured that at least 3 experts independently evaluate all proposals in the panel (according to prescribed criteria), after which they take part in a discussion and coordination of reviews and ranking of project proposals.

In the evaluation carried out by the members of Scientific Committees it is always necessary to ensure at least two opinions/estimates per project proposal.

Evaluation process

The Foundation uses several evaluation procedures which are determined by the type of the programme/Call. Project proposals may be evaluated by members of the Scientific Committees and reviewers, and the evaluation can be peer review, panel review and/or a combination of both.

TWO-STAGE EVALUATION PROCEDURE

As a rule, for the programmes to which large financial funds are awarded (e.g. more than 300.000 HRK per project) a two-stage procedure is carried out which involves first receiving and evaluating project proposal outlines, and then, based on the Foundation's call, the submissions of full project proposals (Table 3). In these programmes, project proposal outlines are evaluated by Scientific Committee members or independent Evaluation Commissions that assess if the project proposal outline meets the terms of the Call. Based on their evaluation, a certain number of applicants will be called to submit the full project proposal.

Full project proposals are evaluated by Croatian or international reviewers. Based on the evaluation, Scientific Committees or Evaluation Commissions rank project proposals and make a list of project proposals entering the second evaluation round. Evaluation results will be referred to all applicants, and applicants entering the second round will have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation results.

After receiving the applicants' responses, the Scientific Committees carry out a final evaluation⁷ by evaluating project proposals according to additional criteria (at least 2 members per project proposal). As part of the final evaluation procedure, with the purpose of determining the best project proposals, a discussion with project applicants and/or an official visit to the applicant's institution can be arranged.

Upon completion of the evaluation, scientific committees rank all project proposals and deliver the list to the Board which decides on the funding of project proposals. The expected duration of two-step evaluation procedure (from the projects' submission date until the Scientific Committee's meeting where the final assessment is carried out) is 6 months.

Table 3: Display of evaluation types in the two-stage evaluation procedure

Submission steps	Type of evaluation	Carried out by
project proposal outline	verification of compliance with the Call 's theme and goals; at least 2 estimates per proposal	Scientific Committees / Evaluation Commissions
full project proposal	peer review; at least 3 experts per proposal	Croatian and international experts
applicant's response	final assessment of priorities, quality of responses to reviews, value of investment in relation to expected gain; at least two estimates per project proposal	Scientific Committees / Evaluation Commissions

⁷ Evaluation criteria are listed in the Means of evaluation section.

ONE-STAGE EVALUATION PROCEDURE

For programmes where an individual project is awarded with an amount up to 300.000 HRK, a different evaluation procedure can be carried out. For these, a panel review of all project proposals can be organised. A panel review is carried out by Evaluation Commissions so that all members of a single commission read and grade all project proposals assigned to them, after which they discuss and rank them. Evaluation results are delivered to members of Scientific Committees which make recommendations on funding to the Board (Table 4).

Table 4: Display of evaluation types in the one-stage evaluation procedure

Call	Defined goals and priorities of the programme, means, deadline and conditions of submission of project proposals
Project proposal submission	Electronic and printed submission in Croatian; official forms
Verification of compliance with the Call's theme	Technical verification of compliance with the Call 's terms; project proposals are directed to evaluation or rejected
Selection of reviewers	Scientific Committees propose independent Croatian experts; Programme Coordinators select reviewers
Evaluation	Panel review
Ranking	Ranking of project proposals according to evaluation results
Decision on funding	Signing of a funding contract, defining rules and obligations
Periodic supervision	Periodic monitoring and project supervision (reports, official visits)
Continuation of funding	Depending on supervision outcome, decision on continuation or discontinuation of funding
Final report	Evaluation of the final report, and, if needed, an audit of spent funds

OFFICIAL VISIT

The official visit of the Foundation is organised for the evaluation of project proposals, their feasibility or the monitoring of progress and fulfilment of obligations of the funded project.

An official visit can be prescribed by the Foundation's Call or determined by the Board based on estimates and Scientific Committee Coordinator's recommendation, in order to ascertain whether high-ranking projects possess adequate conditions for the implementation of project activities. The visit can also be organised during the project. The official visit includes preparation for the visit, first meeting of the Foundation's Committee (before visiting the institution), visiting the institution, second meeting of the Foundation's Committee (after visiting the institution).

PARTICIPANTS OF THE MEETING

After the Board reaches a decision on the official visit, member participants of the Foundation's Committee are suggested (hereafter: "Foundation Committee"). One member of the Committee is a member of the Scientific Committee, one member is a project reviewer, and alongside them the Scientific Committee's Coordinator can also suggest other scientists. The Public Call's Programme Coordinator also takes part in the official visit. The composition of this Committee is determined by the Scientific Committee. When designating the Committee members, recommendations for the evasion of conflict of interest are applied.

Along with the Committee members, the meeting also includes representatives of the project and institution in which the project is implemented (hereafter Project Board). The Project Board is comprised of the:

Project Leader

Head of the institution implementing the project

Members of the Project Board can also be the:

Representative of other co-signers of the Funding Contract or collaborators on the project proposal or project

Other collaborators suggested by the Project Leader and accepted by the Foundation's Board

MEANS OF EVALUATION

All forms of evaluation are carried out in accordance with the determined criteria. In order to ensure the transparency of the entire procedure, all criteria are available to the applicants (along with the text of the Public Call and the forms).

General evaluation criteria are in common to all programmes funded by the Foundation, while certain programmes can also have specific criteria. General and specific criteria are determined individually through the evaluation form for each programme.

GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL OUTLINES

Project proposal outlines are evaluated by the Scientific Committee members according to predetermined criteria in **Form I**⁸. This form is used for evaluating project proposal outlines by checking their compliance with the Call's and Foundation's priorities and goals⁹. Each project proposal outline is assessed by the Scientific Committee Coordinator and one member of the Scientific Committee (closest to the scientific field of the submission). Based on the assessment results, the applicant is called to submit the full project proposal or informed that their project does not fit with the Call's and Foundation's goals and priorities at the moment.

General criteria for accepting project proposal outlines are:

- project proposal's compliance with the Call's theme
- project proposal's compliance with the Call's goals and Foundation's priorities
- fulfilment of basic (formal) Call criteria
- support from the institution

GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR FULL PROJECT PROPOSALS

Full project proposal evaluation carried out by independent experts (peer review and panel review) is based primarily on scientific excellence of the proposed research, applicants and research

⁸ Example of Form I is in the attachment.

⁹ Theme, goals, Foundation's priorities and basic Call criteria are determined individually in each Call.

environment, and the quality and importance of the project proposal. Each individual criterion is rated with a grade, and grades are supported by arguments.

General evaluation criteria for full project proposal evaluation are:

- scientific excellence and importance of the research
- competence, qualification and previous experience of the applicant
- quality of research environment and cooperation
- quality of the project proposal (feasibility assessment)
- adequacy and justification of the financial plan
- risk assessment
- ethical issues
- dissemination of results

After the peer review, the reviewer must determine a final rating for the project as a whole (Table 5). This rating does not have to be an arithmetic mean of previously listed ratings but it must reflect the assessment of all criteria.

Table number 5. Overall rating of project proposals (reviewers)

Quality of the research	Rating	Rating explanation
Excellent quality research	10	Exceptional.
	9	Excellent. Research which will be at the forefront internationally. Addresses very important questions. Likely to have a high impact on the further development of the field and/or practical application.
Very good research quality	8	Very good, bordering on excellent.
	7	Very good. Research is competitive on an international level. Theme of the research is of great importance. Likely to have a significant impact on the further development of the field and /or practical application.
	6	Good quality research, on the border between national and international standing.
	5	Good quality research. Nationally competitive research. Addresses reasonably important questions. Good prospects of making some impact on the field and/or having practical application. Any significant concerns about the research approach can be corrected, easily.
Potentially useful research	4	Potentially useful with certain deficiencies. The project proposal is potentially useful, bordering on good quality research.
	3	Potentially useful with relevant deficiencies. Research plans which contain some good ideas and/or opportunities, but which are very unlikely to be productive and/or successful. Major improvements would be needed to make the proposal competitive.
Unacceptable quality	2	Poor. Potentially useful in some aspects, bordering on unacceptable in others.
	1	Unacceptable. Serious scientific or ethical concerns. Should not be funded.

Based on the peer review results, Scientific Committee members rank project proposals. In the one-stage evaluation procedure Scientific Committees, following the established ranking, provide the Board with recommendations on the funding of projects. In the two-stage evaluation procedure Scientific Committees, following the established ranking, determine which applicants will be asked to respond to evaluation results in order to enter the second evaluation round.

FINAL EVALUATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

In the second evaluation round project proposals are evaluated by members of the Scientific Committees according to **Form III**, as per the following criteria:

Quality of responses to the reviews

Priority assessment

Contribution and application of results

Assessment of investment value in relation to expected gain

An SC member assigns a final grade to the project proposal by which the whole project is rated, as well as a funding recommendation in accordance with the criteria and the rating system displayed in the Table number 6.

Table 6: Display of final grades

Grade	Description	
10	Exceptional. Top international programme or of exceptional national strategic importance.	<i>Fundable</i>
9	Excellent. Internationally competitive and leading in most areas.	<i>Fundable</i>
8	Very high quality. Internationally competitive and leading edge nationally.	<i>Fundable</i>
7	High quality. Leading edge nationally, and internationally competitive in parts.	<i>Fundable</i>
6	High quality. Leading edge nationally, but not yet internationally competitive.	<i>Fundable</i>
5	Good quality – Nationally competitive	<i>Not fundable</i>
4	Potentially useful – with significant weaknesses.	<i>Not fundable</i>
3	Potentially useful – with major weaknesses.	<i>Not fundable</i>
2	Poor quality science, bordering on unacceptable.	<i>Not fundable</i>
1	Unacceptable quality and/or serious ethical concerns.	<i>Not fundable</i>

Based on the evaluation results Scientific Committees make a final ranking of the projects and recommend them to the Board for funding. The final ranking is created based on the grades and recommendations of reviewers, applicant's responses as well as recommendations of the Scientific Committee. In doing so, results from the reviewers carry 85% of the total result value, while results from the Scientific Committees' evaluation carry 15% of total result value.

Recommendations for the evasion of conflicts of interest

The Board sets basic criteria by which possible conflicts of interest are reduced to a minimum and ways of resolving a conflict of interest. Although it is impossible to prescribe all situations in which conflict of interest can occur, the Board emphasises the importance of personal assessment of each individual involved in the evaluation on whether the conflict of interest exists, and discussion with the Scientific Committee Coordinator of further action in the evaluation.

There are prescribed steps during the evaluation procedure and submission processing by which cooperation with persons who could be biased is avoided. Conflict of interests for Foundation's Bodies (members of the Board, members of Scientific Committees and the Executive Director) are prescribed by the Law On the Croatian Science Foundation (Official Gazette 117/2001, 45/2009 and 92/2010) and are the foundation for developing recommendations for the evasion of conflict of interest for other Boards and persons involved in the evaluation of project proposals and projects. Here, the primary thoughts are on:

- Applicants (project leaders and collaborators)
- Reviewers
- Scientific Committees' members
- Evaluation Commissions' members
- Foundation employees

All persons listed involved in the evaluation procedure may not submit projects to Calls by the Foundation.

Personal interest or prejudice must not influence the outcome, the evaluation or the decision on funding. Persons exempt from the evaluation, participation in decisions on funding or any other stage of the submission processing, are:

- Candidates for the Call for which the evaluation is being carried out
- Employees of the institution which also employs the applied project's Leader or institution in which the project will be implemented,
- Ones who have with the Project Leader had joint publications or national or international projects in the past tree years,
- Who are in direct scientific competition when projects are concerned,
- Who have common interests, for e.g. joint entrepreneurship activity,
- Who are a blood relative to the candidate in a straight line to any degree, in the lateral line to the fourth degree, or are a spouse, extramarital partner or relative by marriage to the second degree, regardless if the marriage is still valid,
- Who are a legal guardian, adoptive parent or an adoptee of the candidate,
- Who have in the past five years had a teacher-student or any other kind of other interdependent relationship with the candidate,
- Who have personal economic interests in the research field of the project proposal submitted for evaluation,
- Where there are factors, other than described, which put into question the person's ability to be impartial during project evaluation.

When selecting reviewers, the Foundation immediately takes into consideration the listed criteria. It is expected that each person involved in the submission processing or its evaluation informs the Programme Coordinator or the Scientific Committee Coordinator on a conflict of interest. If a bias is ascertained before the beginning of the evaluation, it is documented and appropriate steps are taken in order to prevent partiality during evaluation. If a bias is ascertained after the evaluation has been carried out or through the internal quality insurance system, further procedures will be stopped by the responsible Scientific Committee Coordinator, another reviewer suggested, and the existing conflict of interest recorded and a solution for the situation proposed. All ascertained conflicts of interest are documented, and the records are delivered to the Board of the Foundation. At the same time, the identity of the reviewer is protected.

Prior to the evaluation, the Programme Coordinator must acquaint the reviewer with Foundation's recommendations for the evasion of conflict of interest and with the obligation to report conflict of interest to the Programme Coordinator, SC Coordinator, or any other body of the Foundation. Conflict of interest is determined on four levels:

Level of appointing reviewers

While appointing, Scientific Committees' or Evaluation Commissions' members are exempt from the appointing of reviewers for project submissions in the described manner. The Scientific Committee Coordinator checks for possible conflicts of interest among Board members while presenting the list of submitted projects which are directed for evaluation and makes a log in which a conflict of interest for Scientific Committee or Evaluation Commissions members is recorded. A member who has conflict of interest does not gain insight into the complete documentation, and does not take part in the discussion on the project proposal. Reviewers for project submissions are suggested by other Scientific Committee members, and the log is delivered to the Foundation's Board.

When appointing reviewers Scientific Committees' or Evaluation Commission's members are led by recommendations on the evasion of conflict of interest, so that experts in conflict of interest do not be contacted for the implementation of evaluation.

Level of hiring reviewers

While hiring reviewers according to the suggestions of the Scientific Committees or Evaluation Commissions, the Programme Coordinator sends to the suggested expert, along with basic information on the project, an inquiry on listed guidelines for the evasion of conflict of interest. Only after receiving the confirmation that he/she does not have a conflict of interest, the expert is presented with the full project proposal. The reviewer confirms that he/she does not have conflict of interest with a personal signature of the confidentiality and no conflict of interest Statement (*in attachment*).

Level of evaluation

A reviewer can determine at any time that he/she is in a conflict of interest and report it to the Programme Coordinator or Scientific Committee Coordinator, with a detailed explanation. The Programme Coordinator or the Scientific Committee Coordinator makes a report. The Scientific Committee Coordinator can appoint an additional reviewer and so the evaluation continues, and the Board of the Foundation is briefed on the conflict of interest.

If a conflict of interest is established for any member of the Foundation Board during an official visit, that member abandons the Board and the evaluation position. After the conflict of interest is discussed, the Foundation Evaluation Board Leader can decide to continue or to stop the evaluation.

Level of the decision on funding

While making a decision on project funding based on the ranking suggested by the Scientific Committee, the member of the Board who is in a conflict of interest will not gain insight in the complete documentation and will abandon the room where the meeting is held during the discussion and decision-making on funding.

The Chairman of the Board attends to the evasion of conflict of interest, and the conflict of interest is documented in the Board's meeting log.

It is recommended that all persons involved in the project submission processing or evaluation state that they have a conflict of interest as soon as they become aware of it. If there is doubt, all questions can be discussed with the Scientific Committee's Coordinator.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Statement on confidentiality and conflict of interest
- Attachment 2 – Example of Form I (Assessment of proposals outlines correlation with the CSF Call and priorities)
- Attachment 3 – Example of the Evaluation form II – Research projects (Peer review of full proposals)
- Attachment 4 – Example of the Evaluation form II – Collaborative Research Programmes (Peer review of full proposals)
- Attachment 5 – Example of Form III (Final Assessment)

ATTACHMENT 1. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

<i>To be fulfilled by the Foundation's employee</i>	
<i>Programme:</i>	
<i>Deadline for applications:</i>	
<i>Project*:</i>	

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I have read and understand the Evaluation Manual, and that I agree that this Statement applies to all the materials and information which I will be introduced with during the evaluation process.

(Please mark appropriate statement with an „X“)

- I declare that I am not in a conflict of interest with the project proposals or reports that I am evaluating in accordance with the provisions the Evaluation Manual of the Croatian Science Foundation¹⁰. I will respect the confidentiality of all data and will not use it for any purposes other than for evaluation.
- I declare that my participation in the evaluation of following project proposals / reports or the evaluation process in general can be considered conflict of interest:

Project – Title or code:

- I declare that I am not in a conflict of interest with other project proposals or reports that I am evaluating in accordance with the provisions the Evaluation Manual of the Croatian Science Foundation. I will respect the confidentiality of all data and will not use it for any purposes other than for evaluation.

Should I discover any conflict of interest during my participation in the evaluation process, I will inform the Board of the Foundation immediately.

Date and signature

¹⁰ Persons exempt from the evaluation, participation in decisions on funding or any other stage of the submission processing, are:

Candidates for the Call for which the evaluation is being carried out

Employees of the institution which also employs the applied project's Leader or institution in which the project will be implemented,

Ones who had joint publications with the Project Leader or took part in joint national or international projects in the past tree years,

Which are in direct scientific competition when projects are concerned,

Which have common interests, for e.g. joint entrepreneurship activity,

Which are a blood relative to the candidate in a straight line to any degree, in the lateral line to the fourth degree, or are a spouse, extramarital partner or relative by marriage to the second degree, regardless if the marriage is still valid,

Which are a legal guardian, adoptive parent or an adoptee of the candidate,

Which have in the past five years had a teacher-student or any other kind of other interdependent relationship with the candidate,

Which have personal economic interests in the research field of the project proposal submitted for evaluation,

Where there are factors, other than described, which put into question the person's ability to be impartial during project evaluation.

* Fill out this field in case of peer-review

ATTACHMENT 2. FORM I - ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL OUTLINES CORRELATION WITH THE CROATIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION'S CALL AND PRIORITIES

Programme name and code:	
Applicant:	
Institution:	

Please answer each question with YES or NO by placing an X mark in the appropriate cell.

***Basic criteria for submitting the Collaborative Research Programme Proposal (according to the Call):**

		YES	NO
1.	The programme proposal includes scientific cooperation between the three (3) or more research groups of which at least 2 are coming from different legal entities and have their previous cooperation documented.		
2.	It is evident from the proposal that the programme will contribute to development of relevant scientific fields and branches and support the interdisciplinary research.		
3.	The programme proposal provides conditions for development of Centres of Excellence in Croatia.		
4.	It is evident that the programme leader has already contributed to the education of young researchers at Ph.D. and Postdoc level (at least 2 Ph.D. students by research group in the last 5 years).		
5.	The programme proposal ensures employment of at least one young researcher (Doc, Postdoc).		
6.	The programme proposal meets the priorities of the institution that submits it.		
7.	The programme proposal stimulates the transfer of knowledge and develops partnership between the University, Economy (or other areas) and local community.		

		YES	NO
1.	Programme Proposal Outline correlates with the theme of this Call.		
2.	Programme Proposal Outline meets the objectives of this Call and the priorities of the Croatian Science Foundation.		
3.	Five (5) or more basic criteria * for submitting the Collaborative Research Programme Proposal Outline (according to the Call) have been fulfilled.		
4.	The applicants have adequate institutional support and capacity for conducting the proposed research.		

	YES	NO
Conclusion: Invite the applicant to send a full programme proposal.		
Please elaborate your recommendation:		

Date:

Name of the Scientific Committee member:

Signature:

ATTACHMENT 3. FORM II –RESEARCH PROJECTS
(Peer review of full proposals)

CRITERIA	GRADE
Programme:	
Reviewer:	
Project leader :	
Project title:	
Project number:	
RESEARCH QUALITY AND IMPORTANCE	
When giving grades and explanations, please consider the following questions: 1) <i>To what extent is the proposed programme scientifically based? What is the importance of the proposed topic in relation to the whole research field? To what extent can the project results improve the relevant research field?</i> 2) <i>What is the quality and innovativeness of the research plan? Do you consider this proposal competitive in relation to existing research on the same topics?</i> 3) <i>Is the proposed methodology the most appropriate and competitive with the best ones in the field?</i> 4) <i>What is the potential of this programme proposal for improving the research field and/or practical application of results?</i> 5) <i>To what extent does the project proposal promote interdisciplinarity?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
APPLICANTS' QUALITY	
When giving grades and explanations, please consider the following questions: 1) <i>Applicants' competences in the research field (applies both to the project leader and associates)? Previous scientific contributions in the field? (Was their work effective and/ or had a significant impact on the development of that specific field of science in Croatia and /or internationally?</i> 2) <i>Are the applicants' publications among the best ¼ in the field?</i> 3) <i>How does the research topic comply with the rest of the applicants' research activities? If this is the applicants' first research in this area, is there a guarantee that he/she will be able to carry it out?</i> 4) <i>Has the applicant proven competence in all the areas which are essential for the research?</i> 5) <i>Does the project leader have the necessary management skills that guarantee successful management of the project?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT	
1) <i>How would you assess the quality of research environment? Does the institution provide the necessary infrastructure and other requirements for the implementation of the proposal?</i> 2) <i>What is the quality of the institutional support given to the project proposal? Do you find the support only declarative or real? Is the institutional support adequate?</i> 3) <i>To what extent is the institutional strategy defined? Does the proposal comply with the institution's strategy and developmental policy?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
QUALITY OF PLANNED COOPERATION	
1) <i>Does the project proposal include cooperation with private sector (SMEs)?</i> 2) <i>Please assess the quality, importance and adequacy of the planned cooperation?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor

(Please explain your grade)	
TRAINING OF RESEARCHERS IN THE EARLY STAGE OF THEIR CAREER 1) <i>Evaluate the project's contribution to the training of researchers in the early stages of research careers?</i> 2) <i>Is the plan of doctoral/postdoctoral students' training clear and well defined?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
PROJECT PROPOSAL QUALITY – feasibility study 1) Work Plan assessment <i>(Is the Work Plan realistic and achievable given the planned time, goals, results and available resources? Are the objectives clear and realistic? Are the project results well planned and achievable?)</i> 2) Capacity assessment <i>(Is the number of persons per research team sufficient given the planned research work?)</i> 3) Risk assessment <i>(Is it a risky proposal? Has the project leader recognized the potential risks? Did he offer suitable solutions?)</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
FINANCIAL PLAN 1) <i>Are the project costs overestimated, underestimated or adequate?</i> 2) <i>Are all the items in the Financial plan well reasoned and justified?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COMMERCIALIZATION 1) <i>Does this project proposal hold potential for the development of intellectual property?</i> 2) <i>Does this project proposal hold potential for commercialization of the project results?</i>	Please respond with YES or NO Please respond with YES or NO
If the answer to one or both of the above questions is YES – 1) <i>Is it likely that the result of the proposed research will be commercially exploitable?</i> 2) <i>Does the institution have a possibility/ competence / capacity to care about the exploitation of project results?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
ETHICAL ISSUES 1) <i>Are there any ethical issues included in the proposal? If so, are they resolved in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with legal provisions and international regulations?</i> 2) <i>Are there any other issues to be addressed (e.g. safety, potential hazards; can the project results be used to abuse humans, animals or the environment)? If so, have the applicants offered satisfactory solutions / security methods)?</i>	Please respond with YES or NO
(Please explain your grade)	
DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS 1) <i>To what extent are the plans for the dissemination of research results appropriate and adequate?</i> 2) <i>To what extent are the plans for the public promotion of the project suitable and sufficient?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
POTENTIAL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES	

1) <i>To what extent will this project help the applicant in future submissions of projects to international programmes and search for partners?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
RESULTS 1) <i>What possible benefits for Croatian science, society and economy arise from this proposal?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
PROJECT PROPOSAL'S MAIN STRENGTHS (Please describe briefly)	
PROJECT PROPOSAL'S MAIN WEAKNESSES (Please describe briefly)	
TOTAL SCORE: PLEASE WRITE THE TOTAL SCORE (1-10) ACCORDING TO THE ATTACHED SCHEME (below) NOTE: Should the total score be less than 6, the project proposal will be rejected from further evaluation.	

Date:	
Experts name, surname and title:	
Experts Signature:	

NOTE: Should the total score be less than 6, the project proposal will be rejected from further evaluation.

Quality of the research	Rating	Rating explanation
Excellent quality research	10	Exceptional.
	9	Excellent. Research which will be at the forefront internationally. Addresses very important questions. Likely to have a high impact on the further development of the field and/or practical application.
Very good research quality	8	Very good, bordering on excellent.
	7	Very good. Research is competitive on an international level. Theme of the research is of great importance. Likely to have a significant impact on the further development of the field and/or practical application.
	6	Good quality research, on the border between national and international standing.
Potentially useful research	5	Good quality research. Nationally competitive research. Addresses reasonably important questions. Good prospects of making some impact on the field and/or having practical application. Any significant concerns about the research approach can be corrected, easily.
	4	Potentially useful with certain deficiencies. The project proposal is potentially useful, bordering on good quality research.
	3	Potentially useful with relevant deficiencies. Research plans which contain some good ideas and/or opportunities, but

		which are very unlikely to be productive and/or successful. Major improvements would be needed to make the proposal competitive.
Unacceptable quality	2	Poor. Potentially useful in some aspects, bordering on unacceptable in others.
	1	Unacceptable. Serious scientific or ethical concerns. Should not be funded.

ATTACHMENT 4. FORM II COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES
(Peer review of full proposals)

CRITERIA	GRADE
Project leader :	
Project title:	
Project number:	
<p>RESEARCH QUALITY AND IMPORTANCE</p> <p>When giving grades and explanations, please consider the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>To what extent is the proposed programme scientifically based? What is the importance of the proposed topic in relation to the whole research field? To what extent can the project results improve the relevant research field?</i> 2) <i>What is the quality and innovativeness of the research plan? Do you consider this proposal competitive in relation to existing research on the same topics?</i> 3) <i>Is the proposed methodology the most appropriate and competitive with the best ones in the field?</i> 4) <i>What is the potential of this programme proposal for improving the research field and/or practical application of results?</i> 5) <i>To what extent does the project proposal promote interdisciplinarity?</i> 	<p>5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor</p>
(Please explain your grade)	
<p>APPLICANTS' QUALITY</p> <p>When giving grades and explanations, please consider the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Applicants' competences in the research field (applies both to the project leader and associates)? Previous scientific contributions in the field? (Was their work effective and/ or had a significant impact on the development of that specific field of science in Croatia and /or internationally?)</i> 2) <i>Are the applicants' publications among the best ¼ in the field?</i> 3) <i>Do 2/3 of the research groups have internationally recognized achievements?</i> 4) <i>How does the research topic comply with the rest of the applicants' research activities? If this is the applicants' first research in this area, is there a guarantee that he/she will be able to carry it out?</i> 5) <i>Has the applicant proven competence in all the areas which are essential for the research?</i> 6) <i>Does the project leader have the necessary management skills that guarantee successful management of the project?</i> 	<p>5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor</p>
(Please explain your grade)	
<p>INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>What is the quality of the institutional support given to the project proposal? Do you find the support only declarative or real?</i> 2) <i>Is the institutional support adequate? Does the institution provide the necessary infrastructure and other requirements for the implementation of the proposal?</i> 3) <i>To what extent is the institutional strategy defined? Does the proposal comply with the institution's strategy and developmental policy?</i> 	<p>5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor</p>
(Please explain your grade)	
<p>COOPERATION OF RESEARCH GROUPS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Please assess the quality, importance and adequacy of the planned cooperation between research groups? Is the program based on a real cooperation of scientific groups (documented multi-year collaboration on projects, joint publications, patents)?</i> 	<p>5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor</p>

(Please explain your grade)	
TRAINING OF RESEARCHERS IN THE EARLY STAGE OF THEIR CAREER 1) <i>Evaluate the project's contribution to the training of researchers in the early stages of research careers?</i> 2) <i>Is the plan of doctoral/postdoctoral students' training clear and well defined?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
PROJECT PROPOSAL QUALITY – feasibility study 1) Work Plan assessment <i>(Is the Work Plan realistic and achievable given the planned time, goals, results and available resources? Are the objectives clear and realistic? Are the project results well planned and achievable?)</i> 2) Capacity assessment <i>(Is the number of persons per research team sufficient given the planned research work?)</i> 3) Risk assessment <i>(Is it a risky proposal? Has the project leader recognized the potential risks? Did he offer suitable solutions?)</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
FINANCIAL PLAN 1) <i>Are the project costs overestimated, underestimated or adequate?</i> 2) <i>Are all the items in the Financial plan well reasoned and justified?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COMMERCIALIZATION 1) <i>Does this project proposal hold potential for the development of intellectual property?</i>	Please respond with YES or NO
2) <i>Does this project proposal hold potential for commercialization of the project results?</i>	Please respond with YES or NO
If the answer to one or both of the above questions is YES – 1) <i>Is it likely that the result of the proposed research will be commercially exploitable?</i> 2) <i>Does the institution have a possibility/ competence / capacity to care about the exploitation of project results?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
ETHICAL ISSUES 1) <i>Are there any ethical issues included in the proposal? If so, are they resolved in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with legal provisions and international regulations?</i> 2) <i>Are there any other issues to be addressed (e.g. safety, potential hazards; can the project results be used to abuse humans, animals or the environment)? If so, have the applicants offered satisfactory solutions / security methods)?</i>	Please respond with YES or NO
(Please explain your grade)	
DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS 1) <i>To what extent are the plans for the dissemination of research results appropriate and adequate?</i> 2) <i>To what extent are the plans for the public promotion of the project suitable and sufficient?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor

(Please explain your grade)	
POTENTIAL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES 1) <i>To what extent will this project help the applicant in future submissions of projects to international programmes and search for partners?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
RESULTS 1) <i>What possible benefits for Croatian science, society and economy arise from this proposal?</i>	5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
(Please explain your grade)	
PROJECT PROPOSAL'S MAIN STRENGTHS (Please describe briefly)	
PROJECT PROPOSAL'S MAIN WEAKNESSES (Please describe briefly)	
TOTAL SCORE: PLEASE WRITE THE TOTAL SCORE (1-10) ACCORDING TO THE ATTACHED SCHEME (below) NOTE: Should the total score be less than 6, the project proposal will be rejected from further evaluation.	

Date:	
Experts name, surname and title:	
Experts Signature:	

NOTE: Should the total score be less than 6, the project proposal will be rejected from further evaluation.

Quality of the research	Rating	Rating explanation
Excellent quality research	10	Exceptional.
	9	Excellent. Research which will be at the forefront internationally. Addresses very important questions. Likely to have a high impact on the further development of the field and/or practical application.
Very good research quality	8	Very good, bordering on excellent.
	7	Very good. Research is competitive on an international level. Theme of the research is of great importance. Likely to have a significant impact on the further development of the field and /or practical application.
	6	Good quality research, on the border between national and international standing.
	5	Good quality research. Nationally competitive research. Addresses reasonably important questions. Good prospects of making some impact on the field and/or having practical application. Any significant concerns about the research approach can be corrected, easily.
Potentially useful research	4	Potentially useful with certain deficiencies. The project proposal is potentially useful, bordering on good quality research.
	3	Potentially useful with relevant deficiencies. Research plans which contain some good ideas and/or opportunities, but which are very unlikely to be productive and/or successful. Major improvements would be needed to make the proposal competitive.
Unacceptable quality	2	Poor. Potentially useful in some aspects, bordering on unacceptable in others.
	1	Unacceptable. Serious scientific or ethical concerns. Should not be funded.

ATTACHMENT 5. FORM III (FINAL ASSESSMENT)

Project Title (or code):	
Applicant:	
Institution:	

Criteria		Grade
PRIORITIES	<p>1. To what extent is the project proposal in accordance with current priorities and strategy of the Foundation?</p> <p>5 – project proposal is completely in accordance with current needs/priorities/strategy of the Foundation 4 – project proposal is mostly in accordance with current needs/priorities/strategy of the Foundation 3 – project proposal is to some extent in accordance with current needs/priorities/strategy of the Foundation 2 – project proposal mostly isn't in accordance with current needs/priorities/strategy of the Foundation 1 – project proposal is not in accordance with current needs/priorities/strategy of the Foundation</p>	(Grade 1 to 5)
	<p>2. How important is to fund the proposal at this time?</p> <p>5 – it is extremely important to fund the proposal at this time 4 – it is very important to fund the proposal at this time 3 – it is to some extent important to fund the proposal at this time 2 – the proposal is important, but it is not critical to fund it at this time 1 – it is not important to fund the proposal at this time</p>	(Grade 1 to 5)
	<p>Why: (please explain)</p>	
CONTRIBUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RESULTS	<p>3. To what extent the project proposal contributes to the development of science in Croatia and internationally?</p> <p>5 – extremely high contribution to the development of science, the results will for sure advance the field of research in Croatia and internationally 4 – notable contribution to the development of science, the result will for sure advance the field of research in Croatia and probably internationally 3 – moderate contribution to the development of science, the results might advance the field of research in Croatia 2 – moderate contribution to the development of science, there are better and more competitive researches in that field 1 – non-significant contribution to the development of science, the theme has already been investigated so this research does not contribute much to existing knowledge</p>	(Grade 1 to 5)
	<p>4. Will the results of the proposed research be of direct benefit to the science institutions and/or industry? Is it realistic to expect that the results of this research will advance the theoretical and/or practical knowledge in other scientific fields and disciplines (applied or basic)?</p> <p>5 – the results are extremely applicable and/or useful 4 – the results are very applicable and/or useful 3 – the results are applicable and/or useful to some extent 2 – the results are barely applicable and/or useful</p>	(Grade 1 to 5)

	<i>1 – the application and/or usefulness of the results is not visible from the proposal</i>	
	5. Are the intellectual property issues resolved in accordance with the Croatian regulations and legal provisions (if such exist)?	Yes No Project proposal does not contain such issues
COST-BENEFIT	6. If the project proposal has been assessed as highly risky, how do you evaluate the ratio between risk and profit? Does the project proposal ensure good value in relation to the requested funding? <i>5 – very good cost-benefit ratio</i> <i>4 – good cost-benefit ratio</i> <i>3 – favourable cost-benefit ratio</i> <i>2 – non-favourable cost-benefit ratio</i> <i>1 – extremely bad cost-benefit ratio</i>	(Grade 1 to 5)
to be answered only for “Collaborative Research Programmes”	6A Is there a possibility that the project proposal (and the cooperation of stated research groups) will lead to development of Centres of Excellence in the proposed field? <i>5 – it is very likely that the programme will result with development of the Centres of Excellence</i> <i>4 – it is likely that the programme will result with development of the Centres of Excellence</i> <i>3 – it is possible that the programme will result with development of the Centres of Excellence</i> <i>2 – there is a small possibility that the programme will result with development of the Centres of Excellence</i> <i>1 – the programme does not have a potential for development of the Centres of Excellence</i>	(Grade 1 to 5)
QUALITY OF RESPONSES TO REVIEWS	7. Did the applicant answer successfully to all weaknesses/questions noted by the reviewers? <i>5 – The applicant answered successfully to all the weaknesses/questions</i> <i>4 – The applicant answered successfully to most of the weaknesses/questions</i> <i>3 – The applicant answered successfully to some of the weaknesses/questions</i> <i>2 – The applicant did not answer successfully to most of the weaknesses/questions</i> <i>1 – The applicant did not answer to the weaknesses/questions</i>	(Please enter your grade 1 to 5)
Ethical issues	8. Project proposal does not contain unresolved ethical concerns.	Yes / No
Sum of all grades		
COMMENTS ADDRESSED TO THE BOARD:		

Final evaluation (please enter grade 1 to 10 according to the attached table):

Grade	Description	Recommendation
10.	Exceptional. Top international programme or of exceptional national strategic importance.	Recommended for funding
9.	Excellent. Internationally competitive and leading in most areas.	Recommended for funding
8.	Very high quality. Internationally competitive and leading edge nationally.	Recommended for funding
7.	High quality. Leading edge nationally, and internationally competitive in parts.	Recommended for funding
6.	High quality. Leading edge nationally, but not yet internationally competitive.	Recommended for funding
5.	Good quality – Nationally competitive	Not recommended for funding
4.	Potentially useful – with significant weaknesses.	Not recommended for funding
3.	Potentially useful – with major weaknesses.	Not recommended for funding
2.	Poor quality science, bordering on unacceptable.	Not recommended for funding
1.	Unacceptable quality and/or serious ethical concerns.	Not recommended for funding

Date: _____

Name and surname of the Scientific Committee member: _____

Signature: _____

Number: U-585-2011

The definitive text of the Project Evaluation Manual was established by the Board of the Croatian Science Foundation on the 4th session held on 3 March 2011 and on the 5th session held on 7 April 2011.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia gave preliminary approval to the Project Evaluation Manual on the 11th July 2011. (Classification No.: 640-01/11-06/00010).

President of the Board
Ivica Kostović, M.D., D.Sc.