Project BIOLAWEB

Deliverable D5.1

The Strategy and AP for ICPO

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Deliverable D5.1
The Strategy and AP for ICPO

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After recognising the need to strengthen capacity to increase the number of submitted applications for HE projects at the University of Belgrade Institute of Chemistry, Technology, and Metallurgy (UB-ICTM) and the establishment of the International Cooperation and Project Office (ICPO), it became necessary to determine the development directions of the newly formed office.

Thanks to the BIOLAWEB HE project and cooperation with the renowned French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment (INRAE), preparation of the development Strategy with an Action Plan for the ICPO was started within WP 5.

This deliverable aims to, based on the conducted needs and gaps analysis, serve as a roadmap for the development of the International Cooperation and Project Office, emphasising cooperation with INRAE and using their experience, best practices, and action plan as a blueprint for the skills development Strategy. The ultimate goal is to improve administrative efficiency, encourage international cooperation, and contribute to the overall success of the UB-ICTM in the field of research and project management.

The ICPO development Strategy is prepared in accordance with the UB-ICTM Development Strategy 2024-2029 (draft version).

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1. Introduction

The Horizon Europe part known as "Widening participation and spreading excellence" including the HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-03 Call, holds immense significance for the BIOLAWEB project and the University of Belgrade Institute of Chemistry, Technology, and Metallurgy (UB-ICTM) in their role as the Coordinator. There are several compelling reasons behind this critical importance. By combining a focus on untapped research and innovation potential in Europe with increased dedication from the underperforming Member States (MS) and Associated Countries, we aim to harness new opportunities.

BIOLAWEB aims at building a sustainable cooperation between the Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade (UB-ICTM), and leading institutions – The French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE, France) and the Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA, Norway), thereby strengthening the research and innovation capacity of UB-ICTM in biodiversity assessment and biomonitoring. BIOLAWEB will:

➢ bring UB-ICTM up to current standards with respect to methods that are currently applied across the European Union, and
➢ apply an existing metabarcoding and eDNA technology to develop new and improved methods using eDNA.

Recently emerging technology will be implemented to develop new tools for water management, which will be useful across Europe. The methods developed in BIOLAWEB will pave the ground for further research and innovation in the assessment of biodiversity and ecological status. The implementation of the BIOLAWEB results will raise the research profile of coordinator and partner institutions and contribute to UB-ICTM's vision of becoming a lighthouse for attracting the best talents and tackling the burning issues of environmental assessment. Staff exchange, common field and laboratory work, and a variety of courses will be used for an effective knowledge transfer from the partnering institutions to UB-ICTM.

In addition to the overarching objective of outlining a clear scientific strategy to enhance scientific excellence and innovation capacity in a specific research domain at UB-ICTM, this twinning project also aims to tackle the evident deficiency in research management and administration expertise in widening countries. This aspect is crucial for achieving successful research outcomes. In order to strengthen research and innovation capacities, BIOLAWEB will establish an office for projects and international cooperation at UB-ICTM to support researchers in activities related to project applications, management and reporting at the international level.

To capitalize on the opportunity given by the call and the competent project consortium, BIOLAWEB focuses on strengthening the research management and administration skills of UB-ICTM through the Work Package 5 "New International Research Management Office". WP 5 establishes a customized scheme of activities and training for UB-ICTM staff with the aim of increasing the number of successful grant applications, improving proposal writing, management and implementation skills, and effective administrative support for researchers.

In line with that, Task 5.3 is dedicated to formulating a strategy for developing the ICPO. Hence, the ICPO Strategy is developed with the help of INRAE and based on the needs and gaps analysis (Task 5.1 - Expert visit for need analysis in project management). This

document provides information on best practices, tools, and policies for administrators of ICPO as a valuable guidance. Action Plan (AP) – Appendix 1 - for improving administration skills through different trainings including those organized within the national network of research management offices is an essential part of the Strategy.

This kind of strategy facilitates a comprehensive range of actions, encompassing tasks like conducting a needs assessment to identify subjects, abilities, and proficiencies to be strengthened within the targeted UB-ICTM personnel. These areas will subsequently be addressed through educational trips, seminars, both physical and virtual workshops, webinars, and similar endeavours.

Expected outcome of Task 5.3 involves the formulation of an Action Plan accompanied by a roadmap. This plan will be implemented and adapted to elevate UB-ICTM's standing, appeal, and capacity to effectively vie for research funding on national, European Union, and global level. The BIOLAWEB project introduces a sustainable impact to UB-ICTM's research support framework and work culture, empowering it for positive transformations and improvements, not just internally but also enabling it to exert influence over the broader national research and innovation community.

Foreseen duration of WP 5 is from M2 – M36, and of Task 5.3 is from M6 - 15.

2. Twinning synergy

The overarching idea of this work package and Task 5.3 jointly implemented by INRAE and UB-ICTM is to try to emulate the INRAE Research Support System and adapt it wherever possible, in order to create a single UB-ICTM roadmap fit for purpose.

The French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE) was established in January 2020 by the merger of INRA (The National Institute for Agricultural Research) and IRSTEA (The National Research Institute of Science and Technology for the Environment and Agriculture) in France. INRAE is comprised of 14 research divisions and it is a leading research institution, ranking as the 10th organization with the highest number of publications by quotation in ecology and environment worldwide. Moreover, INRAE staff participated in 280 projects funded under FP7 programs and more than 312 projects under H2020 (coordinating 94).

INRAE's research support services (the equivalent of ICPO) are organized as follows. There are 8 different departments:

- Assets and logistics (6)*
- Human Resources (14)*
- Risk and Prevention (2)*
- Public procurement (2)*
- Partnership and project management (4)*
- Administrative management service (13)*
- Budget, finance and accounting department (9)*
- Communication (4)*
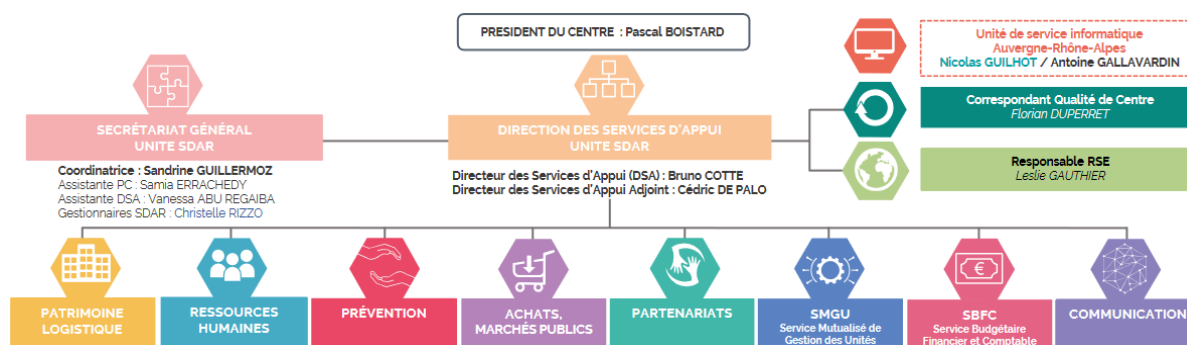
Numbers in brackets shows the number of employees

Figure 1. INRAE organizational chart

University of Belgrade
Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy
National Institute of the Republic of Serbia

The University of Belgrade, Institute of Chemistry, Technology, and Metallurgy, National Institute of the Republic of Serbia (UB-ICTM), is one of the eight National Institutes in Serbia, with over 60 years of tradition in science, 253 full-time employees, and about 220 researchers, of whom more than 160 are PhDs. In recent years UB-ICTM has established itself not only in the national framework, but also as an internationally recognized research institution. UB-ICTM has been a strong base of science in fundamental research since its establishment in 1961, thus continuing the tradition of the State Chemical Laboratory, which was founded in 1859 by Prince Miloš Obrenović. It is a public, non-profit institution, dedicated to research and education.

Activities are organized through six scientific departments, two centres of excellence, and a certified Laboratory for Instrumental Analysis (ISO/IEC 17025). UB-ICTM has exceptional expertise in all fields of chemistry (synthetic organic, inorganic, medicinal, computational, analytical, and biochemistry), biotechnology, catalysis, electrochemistry, chemical engineering, materials science, environmental protection, microelectronics, the design and development of sensors, microelectromechanical systems, microfluidics, nanoscience, and nanotechnology, as well as extensive experience in applied research, knowledge transfer, and the development of innovative solutions and products. Committed and competent staff across the departments make the UB-ICTM recognized for its excellence, responsible research and commitment to social engagement, science promotion and creating educated and open-

minded young experts. The Institute is strategically oriented to the EU and other external funding which serve to unlock its potential and fully employ its excellence. Finaly, around 91% of UB-ICTM's researchers that participated in the BIOLAWEB Task 2.3 questionnaire believe that developing DNA-based methods will give UB-ICTM an advantage in the next decade.

The output of scientific papers from UB-ICTM in 2022 was about 235 publications in peer-reviewed international journals. In the last decade, UB-ICTM researchers coordinated or participated in more than 80 national and 40 international scientific projects financed by renowned foundations and produced more than 80 technical solutions, products, and technologies.

On the one hand, UB-ICTM has been thriving in attracting national funding for research due to its portfolio of results in fundamental/interdisciplinary sciences. However, on the other hand, the existing research support system does not suffice to cater fully to the needs of the research community and needs reshaping, skills enhancement, and enlargement in regard to recruitment of more competent staff, especially in the International Cooperation Project Office (ICPO). Being the only office to provide what in the INRAE is covered by the several teams of experts, UB-ICTM ICPO is facing various challenges in responding to the needs of researchers in timely and comprehensive manner. UB-ICTM ICPO currently employs three part-time officers – Head of the Office, Coordinator for project administration and Administrator for financial affairs.

Core research support and services provided by UB-ICTM ICPO can be summarized as:

➢ Coordination of work in accordance with the real needs of researchers and the Institute's strategic priorities in the field of international cooperation, access to funds and participation in calls for projects;
➢ Activities encouraging the submission of project proposals to all funding sources in the field of basic research, technological development and international cooperation;
➢ Consolidation and analysis of data related to the participation of researchers in international cooperation, applications and implementation of projects;
➢ Organization of trainings, workshops and seminars in the field of international cooperation, access to funds, participation in calls for projects, preparation of project proposals and implementation of projects;
➢ Coordination of administrative assistance and budget planning for researchers when writing proposals for international or domestic projects (project application phase);
➢ Coordination of assistance to researchers in the administrative and financial parts (project budget) when signing contracts for projects approved for funding (negotiation phase after successful project evaluation);
➢ Coordination of assistance to researchers in administrative and financial (collection, recording and control of documents related to direct, indirect and other costs) tasks when submitting documents - deliverables, periodic reports, etc. (project realization phase);
➢ Preparation of cooperation programs with scientific and other institutions in the country and abroad (ERASMUS+, COST, etc.);
➢ Activities to improve the visibility of investigators and investigations in UB-ICTM;
➢ UB-ICTM promotion and support of networking with potential partners with the purpose of forming future project consortiums;
➢ Consultations (online and face-to-face during open doors hours).

The financial common unit (Figure 2) assumes responsibility for the financial execution of the ongoing grants, encompassing both domestic and international funding. Its primary focus lies in the realm of post-award financial management of grants. The Legal Office, on the other hand, supervises the employment agreements of researchers and provides assistance to ICPO in coordinating grant contracts as needed. All three entities—Financial Unit, Legal Office, and ICPO—play a pivotal role in providing effective assistance to the UB-ICTM's researchers. Consequently, the Strategy and action plan aim to boost capacities and capabilities of the entire UB-ICTM's research support services and framework by placing ICPO in center as an initiator and coordinator of the joint activities. The increasing requirement for diverse and proficient services within UB-ICTM underscores the necessity for a strategic framework concerning research planning and advancement. This entails establishing research support teams by boosting human capabilities and nurturing a research-oriented culture within the institution. Recognizing that the current support structure is essentially centred around sporadic and responsive efforts, "on demand" basis, there is a compelling need for a carefully crafted and customized strategy to establish an effective institutional research support system—both on administrative and managerial fronts. Such a strategy is crucial in order to enhance the evident research potential demonstrated by UB-ICTM.
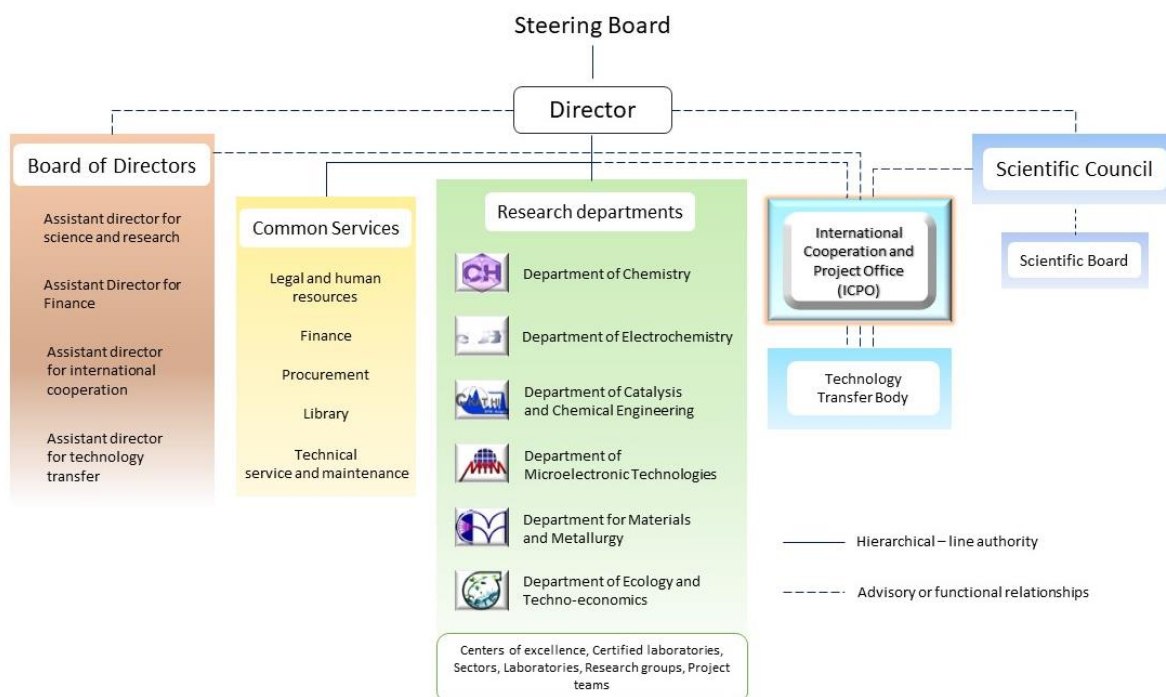

Figure 2. UB-ICTM organizational chart

3. Mission, vision and values of ICPO

Mission: Guide, support, and motivate researchers to apply for international projects, either as partners or coordinators. Assist in the regulatory, financial, and administrative aspects of project proposal preparation and improve the success rate.

Vision: Cultivating a dynamic and research-intensive environment at UB-ICTM to empower all its members, including researchers, administrative staff, and collaborators, to unleash their full potential. ICPO's ambition is to provide the resources and support necessary for each individual to achieve extraordinary outcomes, while contributing to global scientific advancement. Strategic focus is to create a functional and efficient ecosystem that not only fosters innovative research but also equips every member of the institution to make significant contributions.

Values:

✓ Strategic Alignment: ensure that all ICPO's activities are aligned with the overall strategic goals and mission of the scientific institution.
✓ Expertise and Competence: prioritize the recruitment and continuous development of highly skilled researchers and administrative staff. Implement specialized training programs, mentorship initiatives to foster a culture of excellence, celebrating the achievements of personnel who contribute to the institution's expertise.
✓ Equality and Ethical Conduct: support high ethical standards in all activities related to projects and international cooperation, ensure equal access to information and training regardless of gender, academic rank, position in the Institute.
✓ Proactiveness: proactively identify the needs of researchers and stakeholders to tailor office activities and services accordingly.
✓ Effective Communication: establish and maintain clear and efficient communication channels, both internally and externally, to foster collaboration and information exchange.
✓ Innovation and Adaptability: encourage a culture of innovation and adaptability to respond effectively to changes in the international research landscape.
✓ Knowledge Sharing: facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices among researchers and staff to enhance the overall expertise of the institution.
✓ Results-Oriented Approach: focus on achieving measurable and impactful outcomes in international projects, emphasizing the contribution to the overall mission of the scientific institution.

4. SWOT analysis

Strengths:

- ✓ ICPO's greatest strength lies in the BIOLAWEB Consortium partners, who possess extensive knowledge and experience. They provide us with invaluable support and training, enabling us to establish and develop ICPO effectively.
- ✓ We have established networks and partnerships with various organizations, including The Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, The Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, and the Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia. Additionally, we maintain connections with other International Research Management Offices within our country.
- ✓ Our Institute comprises qualified research staff capable of writing and implementing international and national projects. We are dedicated to supporting them and offering assistance in administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on their scientific pursuits.
- ✓ We have young researchers who have been awarded prestigious scholarships and are eager to apply for projects.
- ✓ In the last two competitive calls of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, the number of projects awarded to UB-ICTM was 10% of the total accepted project proposals, which represents a very solid basis for preparation of EU funded projects, given the similarity of the two.

To maximize these strengths, we must adopt a proactive approach.

Weaknesses:

- ✓ We have limited experience in supporting scientists in applying for European Union projects. However, we have been diligently working on this aspect since the establishment of our office.
- ✓ We currently face limitations in terms of resources, including funding, staff, technologies, and infrastructure
- ✓ The preparation of quality project proposals can require a lot of time and the necessary resources. This can potentially delay and impact the ICPO's ability to provide timely and effective support.
- ✓ Our communication channels require improvement. We recognize the need to enhance our communication channels to ensure efficient and seamless information flow within the organization.

Addressing these weaknesses is a priority for us as we strive to overcome these obstacles and further strengthen our capabilities.

Opportunities:

- ✓ Collaborative research is a tool for ensuring scientific excellence by exchanging ideas and experience. This presents a significant opportunity for the ICPO to support Serbian scientists in establishing international collaborations and securing funding for their research projects.
- ✓ The availability of new funding opportunities opens doors for innovation and capacity building. The ICPO can leverage these opportunities to support and enhance the research capabilities of Serbian scientists.
- ✓ By actively building stronger networks with international partners, the ICPO can expand its reach and foster collaborations that lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.

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- ✓ Developing specialized expertise, such as project management, provides an opportunity for the ICPO to enhance its capabilities and deliver more effective support to researchers.
- ✓ Successful research projects have the potential to make a significant impact on economic development, especially in fields like biotechnology and environmental science. The ICPO can play a pivotal role in facilitating the development and implementation of innovative research projects, thereby supporting economic growth in Serbia.

Threats:

- ✓ Language barriers: The administrative staff may face language barriers when working with international organizations or partners. This can create communication challenges and make it difficult to navigate complex application processes.
- ✓ Political instability in Serbia or other countries involved in the project can create uncertainty and potentially hinder the international cooperation and project office's ability to secure funding and manage the project effectively. Additionally, changes in government policies can affect the regulatory environment and funding opportunities for scientific research.
- ✓ Insufficient government investment in infrastructure capacities poses a threat. Without adequate investment, the ICPO may face limitations in accessing necessary resources and infrastructure required for successful project implementation (for example: *Office Space:* adequate office infrastructure, including workspaces, conference rooms, and similar spatial resources, is necessary for the efficient conduct of administrative tasks and meetings related to international projects; *IT and Communication Infrastructure:* Access to reliable and secure IT infrastructure, including computers, server resources, network equipment, and means for video conferencing, is crucial for coordination and communication with international partners; *Database and Information System:* Developing and maintaining an information system that supports records of projects, resources, researchers, and partners is essential for effective project management and progress tracking).
- ✓ "Brain drain" - the potential risk lies in the possibility that skilled employees, whose talents have been recognized, may be enticed by more favourable living and working conditions. The danger is that personnel, for whom an investment has been made, might migrate to other institutions or private enterprises due to the absence of an inspiring and affirming work environment.

SWOT ANALYSIS – ICPO	
STRENGTHS: ✓ Consortium partners ✓ Networks and Partnerships with various organizations ✓ Qualified research staff for writing and implementation of International/National Projects ✓ Young researchers with prestigious scholarships interested in applying for the projects	**WEAKNESSES:** ✓ Limited experience in supporting scientist in applying for European Union projects ✓ Limited Resources ✓ Time-consuming application process ✓ Communication channels
OPPORTUNITIES: ✓ Increasing the demand for international collaboration ✓ Access to New Funding Opportunities ✓ Building stronger networks with international partners ✓ Developing specialized expertise (project management) ✓ Supporting economic development	**THREATS:** ✓ Language barriers ✓ Political Instability ✓ Lack of Government investment in infrastructure capacities ✓ Brain drain

5. Strategic goals for UB-ICTM

The overall vision will be achieved through a series of established strategic objectives, which are supported by well-defined initiatives that are set to take place within the next 3–5 years. These strategic goals define and highlight key areas the institute should work on within the stated time period. In order for them to be a blueprint and to provide clear guidance, it is of utmost importance that they take into consideration the actual state of knowledge, competences, and currently available resources.

The strategic goals include the areas in which UB-ICTM wants to excel:

SG1 - Streamlining UB-ICTM research support services and post-award management;

SG2 - Creating alliances and collaborations;

SG3 - Improving the visibility of research outputs;

SG4 - Increasing knowledge and leadership capabilities of researchers and supporting staff.

The stated strategic goals and objectives resulted from the contributions of all stakeholders and were developed through discussions, within the working group meetings, (online and personal) visits and surveys by project partners, and were supported, confirmed and adopted by the "Management Board" or "of the UB-ICTM Board of Directors".

Initial Surveying (WP5, Task 5.1 Expert visit for need analysis in project management)

Two experts from INRAE (Research Administration Staff) visited UB-ICTM and, in collaboration with ICPO staff and BIOLAWEB project researchers, conducted a qualitative survey to identify the needs, skills and competencies required by UB-ICTM research staff for the newly established Research Administration Support Unit. The survey results are intended to help formulate appropriate ICPO development procedures that allow us to focus our work. The survey also aimed to identify potential leaders within the Institute as well as their interests and ambitions.

Survey Results

The questions and summary results of the survey can be seen in Appendix 2.

From the answers received, directions were clearly defined in which the staff of the International Cooperation Project Office should be developed and improved, and guidelines for further activities were obtained, both within the ICPO and within the Institute as a whole. It is concluded that the needs of UB-ICTM researchers are:

➢ Improve UB-ICTM research development and support services;
➢ Help the leaders, defined by the survey, to find a suitable call and submit a successful and sustainable project proposal;
➢ Improvement of research leadership skills through training programs;
➢ Improve administrative and financial skills of ICPO staff;
➢ Organize workshops with experts;
➢ Develop international cooperation with the aim of finding foreign partners and inclusion in EU projects;
➢ Elevate the recognition of the Institute and improve the visibility of research results;
➢ Provide professional and organized assistance to researchers in legal, financial and administrative affairs after receiving a grant;

6. Workshops (trainings webinars) planned to be held during the implementation of the project

The results of the survey were further assessed, used and shaped in such a way as to correspond to the content of well-targeted trainings and information sessions that were held in the following period in order to support the research

The results of the survey were used to develop a dedicated content of the first workshop and focused on the following topics:

➢ How to build a competitive proposal?
   ✓ General Framework of the Horizon Europe Program
   ✓ Study Case: How to fill in a proposal
   ✓ With focus on Key Issue
      - Gender Equality Plan
      - The principle of Open Science
      - The notion of ethics
➢ Training in financial management and project reporting

- ✓ Focusing on the understanding of Horizon Europe rules, diffusing this knowledge in your organization and on defining the process in order to manage Horizon Europe Grants
- ✓ (UE Portal) Case study regarding HE management grants
- ➢ How to prepare and negotiate a consortium agreement
- ➢ Other European programs such as INTERREG, MTA, APA and Nagoya protocol.

INRAE and UB-ICTM teams worked closely together to identify and deliver training program content.

A comprehensive overview of WP5 - T5.4 Subtask 5.4.1 and T5.5 Subtask 5.5.2 activities carried out so far is provided in Appendix 3.

Priority topics for capacity building

These topics have been identified from both the initial needs analysis survey and feedback from the first workshop in April 2023. and a set of learning outcomes has been identified for each one.

Proposal writing for Horizon Europe

This will focus on the details of writing a proposal for Horizon Europe but will not provide much insight into budgets as this will be covered separately.

Learning outcomes:

- - Understand the different sections that make up a proposal;
- - Learn tips and tricks about how to write a proposal well;
- - Learn about the new templates for Horizon Europe;
- - Learn about ideas for presenting key parts of your proposal clearly;

Development of budgets and justifications

We will focus on how to develop a budget for funding, primarily focusing on Horizon Europe.

Learning outcomes:

- - Understand the rules around European budgets and funding;
- - Be given key tips about items not to forget when thinking about budgets;
- - Understand how to develop your own spreadsheets to budget preparation;
- - The lump-sum model of the Horizon EU budget.

Internal approvals for submissions and projects

This will focus on methods of obtaining approval, focusing on the importance of channelling the application process.

Learning outcomes:

- - Understand the importance of introducing electronic workflows.
- - Learn how approvals can improve communication and efficiency.
- - Understand the role of approvals in reducing risk and ensuring that the right resources are available at the right time.

Understanding what to do with unsuccessful proposal results

This will focus on the importance of learning from feedback and communicating any outcomes from submissions

Learning outcomes:

- Understanding how accurate management information can lead to interventions, training to improve success rates and grant success;
- Learn how feedback can be compared to improve results;
- Understand common problems in failed proposals.

Understanding project reporting, closure & document management

This will look at EU requirements for reporting and the need to manage documents effectively.

Learning outcomes:

- Importance of document retention policies for audit purposes and project management;
- Understand EU reporting requirements for funded projects;
- Understand the processes and reporting around project closures.

EU contracting expectations

This will focus on the acceptance of the grant from the European Commission and putting in place of appropriate agreements between parties.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand the expectation of the European Commission when agreeing Consortium Agreement between partners;
- Understand the clauses that are optional and can be amended during negotiations with partners;
- Develop a knowledge of timescales and when to involve partners to assure the agreement is in place in line with expectations.

Internal communications around research & acknowledging research success within the organization

This will take the form of an interactive workshop.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand the importance of internal communications around research;
- Consider good mechanisms for internal communication;
- Understand the importance of celebrating research success;
- Consider different ways of being able to celebrate research success within your organization.

These are summarized below with initially proposed delivery dates:

Topic	Method of delivery	Length	People involved	Provisional date
Writing project proposals for Horizon Europe	On site/On line	4-5 hours	NIVA – on line Task 5.4, Subtask 5.4.2 Sanja Vraneš – on site	Spring 2024
Budget preparation and justification	On site	2-3 hours	Katarina Milanović Task 5.5, Subtask 5.5.2 Tatjana Božić	Autumn 2023
Internal regulations guiding the project proposal application process	On line	2 hours	Vladan Ćosović Predrag Banković Željko Čupić	Spring 2024
Understanding what to do with unsuccessful proposal results	On site	2-4 hours	ICPO staff	Autumn 2024
Understanding project reporting, closure and document management	On site	2-4 hours	Dragana Zlatović Katarina Milanović Task 5.5, Subtask 5.5.2	Summer 2025
Expectations of EU contracting	On line	2 hours	INRAE Task 5.4, Subtask 5.4.2 Branko Ćirković Ana Radulović	Autumn 2024
Internal communications about research	On site	2 hours	ICPO staff	Periodically starting from spring 2024

7. Major objectives and actions to achieve goals

SG1 - Streamlining UB-ICTM research support services and post-award management

This strategic goal intends to enhance UB-ICTM's overall research development and support capabilities and capacities.

Objective 1: Ensuring that appropriate support to proposals is provided at the right stage

By understanding what type of support proposals need at what stage of preparation and award, the appropriate UB-ICTM bodies (ICPO, legal, finance, and technology transfer) can be involved at the right time.

At this moment, the Institute has put in place an ID form as a Word document, and anyone who wants to submit a project proposal is expected to fill out this ID form first and send it to the Scientific Council. ICPO receives a copy; however, this step is sometimes omitted. An online solution will prevent this and decrease the administrative workload.

An online version of the project proposal ID form will be developed and made available to UB-ICTM staff internally via a dedicated web page (hosted on the UB-ICTM institutional website). It is envisioned as the starting point of a project application, and it is of utmost importance that the researchers and the Institute leadership acknowledge the ID form as mandatory and critical to maintaining this process. The purpose of this online form is to streamline the application process and enable more efficient collection of information from various relevant actors within UB-ICTM. The form will cover the most important questions that are essential for a support to grant application, and it will also contain specific questions, ensuring that the right resources are available exactly when they're needed. In conclusion, the form will be used to request particular assistance from the appropriate UB-ICTM offices or other parties, if necessary, as well as to inform Institute leadership of new project applications.

Prior to posting on the Institute website, the developed project ID form will undergo scrutiny and review by relevant bodies of the Institute. In order to increase adoption of the Project ID form within the Institute and make its use routine and integral part of the UB-ICTM's working culture of applying for research grants, full support from the Assistant Directors, Scientific Council, and management of the Institute will be needed.
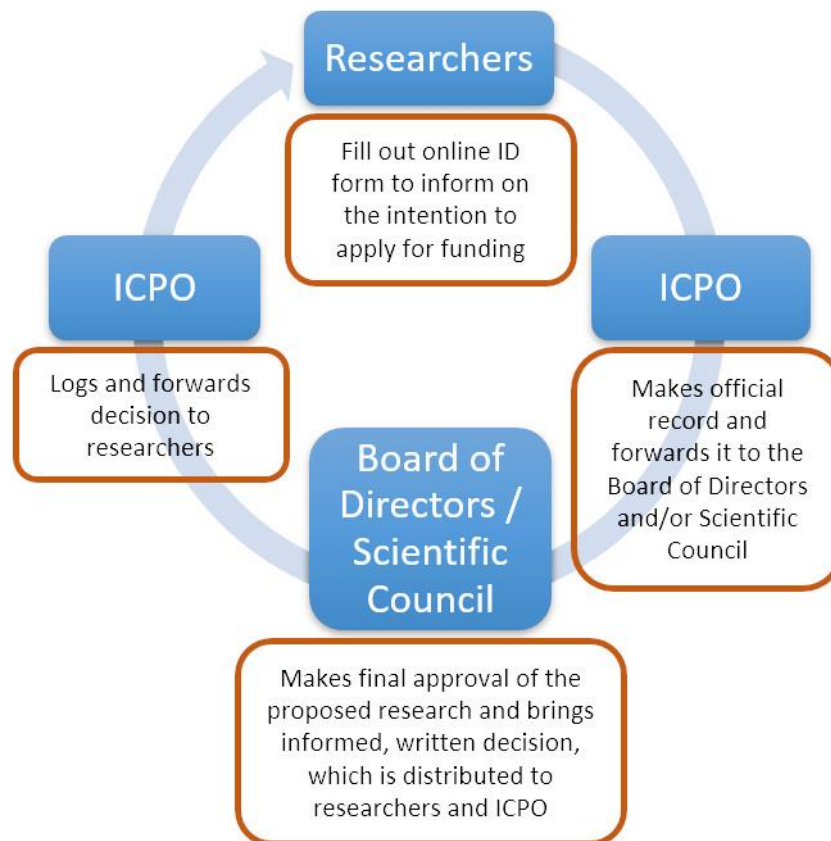
Figure 3. Online ID form flow to bring informed decisions in supporting research at UB-ICTM

In essence, the form covers the most important questions that are essential for a support to grant application:

1. Basic information about the project
   - Type of project/Source of funding
   - Call program
   - Working name of the project
   - Head of the project (name and surname; contact: telephone, e-mail address, institution of employment, address)
   - Principal Institution
   - Other Institutions participating in the project
   - Project application deadline
   - Project duration (in months)
2. Researchers from UB-ICTM
3. Estimated Project Value (RSD)

Objective 2: Introducing and organizing regular meetings of ICPO staff with stakeholders

This goal aims to ensure constant cooperation and coordination of activities between ICPO and stakeholders within UB-ICTM. Regular meetings between ICPO staff and research coordinators (e.g., assistant directors, department heads, senior and young talented

researchers) should be introduced and organized to improve visibility, raise awareness of available funding opportunities and improve and optimize research support procedures.

The research coordinator role can be defined as an individual who has oversight of the research activity being undertaken within their own department and can use this to support more strategic initiatives throughout the Institute. UB-ICTM has six departments with unique research strengths and an established system of departmental heads as well as Assistant Directors for Science, International Cooperation, and Technological Development, which are to some extent mandated to coordinate research within the rather wide range of disciplines covered by UB-ICTM. In addition, should the need arise, experienced and senior researchers may also be mandated to serve as research coordinators.

Objective 3: Closer collaboration and better coordination between the research support services (ICPO and legal, finance, and technology transfer team)

In order to more effectively support research at the Institute, this objective is essential. The legal, finance, and technology transfer teams are still in the early stages of providing support for European research grants and require significant support from the ICPO. As a consequence, the ICPO cannot allocate sufficient time to the strategically important proposal support that is needed to improve the quality of proposals. The development of collaborative processes and procedures will define which bodies are responsible for which aspects of the grant lifecycle. However, in order for everyone to be able to take on such responsibilities, it is necessary to start by understanding the level of current staff skills and competences and to establish necessary training and assistance accordingly.

Engaging colleagues from across the Institute can be difficult; however, there is a solid basis to build upon in good working relationships between the participating offices and individual employees. The workload distribution and the clear definitions of roles and responsibilities will help nurture a healthy work environment and existing work relations.

Objective 4: Streamlining post-award and monitoring processes

This objective is related to the further development of the customised online project proposal ID form to streamline post-award and monitoring processes. For this purpose, an already existing project ID form will be used as a basis to build upon. Through its use, the ICPO will be able to keep an accurate, up-to-date database and overview of the projects that have been awarded. This will also enable the ICPO to timely inform the other research support bodies (e.g., legal and finance) to enable them to plan their work more efficiently. Additionally, this will enable easier support for any public relations activities and research success promotions.

Given that the use of the online proposal ID form and the monitoring system it provides affects a number of strategic goals and objectives, the institute leadership, administration, and research coordinators are expected to enforce its widespread use by researchers.

Objective 5: Ensuring that ICPO and other UB-ICTM research support services have capacity to manage the workload

This objective depends on the management of UB-ICTM being committed to supporting and promoting reforms. Staff from the research support bodies (services) could organise meetings to discuss novel practices and ways to collaborate more effectively. The challenges and potential solutions identified by the group can then be presented to the Institute management to make sure that everyone is aware of where improvements might actually make a difference

to institute research activity. After these discussions, the priority solutions can be put into practice.

Various IT solutions are available to assist with different areas of the grant lifecycle. Some of them enable locating funding sources, while others assist with the workflow of grants and proposals after they have been granted. By integrating such solutions into practice, research support services may be able to free up time and support more grant applications in the process. However, it will be necessary to assess things in the context of the organisation first and carefully determine which IT solutions would be appropriate. The objective offers a starting point for thinking about various possibilities and how well they might fit with the actual needs and overall strategy of the ICPO and the Institute.

It is understood that cost is a mitigating element for any substantial changes (increase of the workforce in the ICPO or implementation of IT solutions) because UB-ICTM is a public institution reliant on governmental legislation and funding.

INRAE Best Practice

INRAE had similar considerations to the ones UB-ICTM has, when INRAE renewed its partnership policy and internal organization in 2017.

The workshops organized in April were notably dedicated to the sharing of best practices and information transfer regarding ICPO organization.

One of the crucial things is the definition of a process during the pre-grant and post grant phases where the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders are clearly defined. Hence everyone knows what is expected from him and what he is supposed to expect for the others.

To this end, at INRAE an organigram had been set up, where the roles of all the directions and services involved in the partnership and grant management were defined.

In parallel, a more precise methodology called "*RACI*" has been put in place to enable us to write very detailed the job profile and make sure that perfectly the skills of the person recruited matches with the tasks entrusted to them:

- **R**   stands for *Responsible*: Person in charge of doing the work/task
- **A**   stands for *Accountable*: the person who takes the decision/approves the task
- **C**   stands for *Consulted*: the person who needs to be consulted before taking a decision
- **I**   stands for *Informed*: the person who needs to be informed before a decision has to be taken

All the different phases of the pre grants have been defined is 5 steps:

- Initiation
- Opportunity (GO/NO GO)
- Elaboration
- Negotiation
- Validation and Signature

For the post grant activities, 4 steps:

- Financial execution of the grants
- Modification of the budget/project
- Reporting
- Payments and accounting closure

All these steps have been divided in different tasks (Setting up of budget of a project, Validation of the proposal, Negotiation of the grant agreement, validation of time-sheets…) and for all of them, a role has been defined for all the stakeholders involved (Researchers, Researcher unit directors, financial managers…).

During the April workshop this methodology was presented and INRAE strongly recommended to draw from RACI. It will help ICPO (its role, responsibility, perimeter of action etc.) to be known from the other directions and researchers. They will help them to better understand ICPO's role and added value.

This process work is a pre-requirement in order to communicate towards research teams. Once this process has been well defined, it has to be materialized in an official document (such as a service note, internal guide) which has to be exhaustive. In addition of this documentation, synthetic documents shall be established in order to communicate (flyers, posters, power presentations etc.) towards researchers. This document shall support all the events and workshops organized with researchers in order to explain and promote the action of ICPO.

SG2 - Creating alliances and collaborations

Objective 1: Establish and cultivate a professional network for the ICPO

Generally speaking, networks are extremely beneficial for professional development because they offer a forum for discussing issues, difficulties, or potential solutions. For this, it helps to have a network of research support personnel who work on related subjects. While UB-ICTM already collaborates with INRAE and NIVA, it is acknowledged that other research organisations (universities, institutes, etc.), both national and international, and particularly those in EU member states, have outstanding research offices for supporting EU funding. These frequently cover pre- and post-award and may offer a useful source for exchanging information, knowledge, and best practices. To create a network of people with whom UB-ICTM can collaborate in the future, a list of national and EU-based research organisations and universities with strong research support bodies will be compiled and contacts will be initiated. In parallel or alternatively, UB-ICTM research support staff can get involved with professional networks such as EARMA and BESTPRAC Network to help develop capabilities for supporting research activities.

The possibility that creating and maintaining such networks may be very time-demanding and add to the ICPO's already significant workload should be taken into consideration. In addition, some of the professional groups (e.g., EARMA) may require payments for institutional membership; hence, the right balance between required resources (time and finance) and obtained benefits needs to be found. If necessary, the ICPO staff can always rely on using their own networks of colleagues and ongoing information, knowledge, and experience sharing.

Objective 2: Cultivate an environment where researchers actively engage in sharing networks and forming collaborations

Regular meetings of researchers have been identified as a possible area where progress could be made. The meetings planned in the first action are designed to bring together teams of researchers to collaborate and discuss potential project ideas related to specific subjects. This will be beneficial both to fostering stronger inter-institutional collaboration and to the creation of fresh concepts and the development of new ideas that are suitable for funding application submissions.

Showcasing success stories and including case studies in the institute meetings is aimed at sharing experiences of developing grant applications and how projects can be successfully delivered. Additionally, it helps research coordinators to have a better grasp of the collaborations that researchers have established for their projects so that they can make suggestions to other colleagues about who they could work with in the future. The majority of the ICPO's involvement would be in supporting and facilitating these meetings and the sharing of updates to ensure that everyone has access to the most relevant information to effectively carry out their duties.

The second action is directed towards establishing or supporting an internal UB-ICTM annual conference – a content-packed event central to celebrating successes achieved in the previous calendar year, enriched with a range of success stories, e.g., scientific breakthroughs, remarkable research papers being published, big financial grants, significant commercial results, noteworthy collaborations, and outstanding achievements of PhD students. In addition, the Scientific Council and senior management of the Institute will decide which aspects of research and academic excellence, as well as the noteworthy contributions of research support staff members, they would want to highlight most through the establishment of awards.

This is a good way to acknowledge excellence in research and genuinely appreciate a wide range of positive efforts made within the UB-ICTM, which is rather important since sharing a common understanding of what success might entail can result in a genuine cultural transformation.

Objective 3: Encourage international research partnerships

International partnerships are vital for the development and preparation of international project proposals, and in the case of building a consortium for EU-funded research and innovation projects, they are essential. As such projects may frequently require at least three entities from three different EU MS/ACs, it is highly beneficial to have a network of true, trusted, and tested international partnering institutions. In the initial stages, ICPO will make use of various tools offered by the European Commission's funding website and other national organisations (e.g., APRE) when looking for existing partnerships needed for certain projects. The ICPO will compile and distribute information about the existing UB-ICTM's networks and partners. It will also keep promoting the informational and brokerage events held by the European Commission and other national funding bodies to entice researchers to attend and learn about additional opportunities to expand their networks.

INRAE Best Practice

In the case of INRAE, we regularly participate in the network of local Research Support Services. In this way, we share our experience, difficulties and solutions with the Research Support Services of the University of Lyon, engineering schools and the CNRS (France's largest research institute).

We often find that everyone has a solution in place, but it's not entirely satisfactory, and in a way, it helps us realize that we're not alone when facing certain interpretation difficulties. It's incredibly profitable.

In addition, as far as possible (because networking is time-consuming), we take part in workshops organized by the European Commission (Lump sum) or by the national contact point, depending on the theme.

At a national level, INRAE is member of a networking association (ANRT – National Association for Research and Technology) gathering together all French research public and private stakeholders enabling them to exchange, network and confront their points of view to build a common strategic vision in order to have an action force.

Last but not least, INRAE could count of French Research Ministry (Directorate on European Affairs) and National Contact Points (NCP) offering guidance on choosing relevant Horizon Europe topics and types of action, advising on administrative procedures and contractual issues, training and assistance on proposal writing, distribution of documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.) and assistance specific difficulties.

As the network of NCP exists in Serbia, INRAE strongly recommends ICPO to consult them once they have a doubt or need additional information on a Horizon Europe related subject.

SG3 - Improving the visibility of research outputs

Objective 1: Present funded research both internally within the organization and to external audiences

Showcasing externally funded research is essential for building recognition within the UB-ICTM of the added value of these types of projects. It also helps bring awareness to the researchers of the funded projects that the Institute participates in and funding opportunities that are available to them.

Having visible success stories available via the website provides a useful way to promote these projects, both internally and externally. Although the news section of the Institute website is currently being utilised to convey some of this information, this activity is sporadic and left to researchers to decide what and when to post. It may take some time for this kind of activity to become fully embedded in the culture and working practices, but the larger sharing of news and successes among colleagues is crucial for creating a more inspiring and collaborative way of working. Since such activity does demand time in order to regularly compile this information, UB-ICTM ICPO will actively participate whenever available resources permit.

Objective 2: Increase the external visibility of UB-ICTM's research outputs, highlighting academic success stories and noteworthy projects

This objective expands on the previous one by increasing the external visibility of research projects and activities through elaborate public relations work. UB-ICTM's existing website and social media accounts will be utilised to showcase the ventures. To some extent, this is an ongoing activity, but it could be enhanced further by the collaboration with a designated UB-ICTM PR person to get a real insight into success stories that have an uplifting and motivating effect. This is a very low-risk activity, and the UB-ICTM ICPO will actively participate whenever resources permit and provide assistance, reminding researchers and institute leadership of the importance of these actions.

INRAE Best Practice

In the case of INRAE, our newsletter features regularly a focus on success stories. This allows us to highlight one or two researchers who will be recognized for their work.

Another approach is to motivate researchers to give occasional talks or conference at the University or at locally-organized conferences.

Finally, and this is still a very recent development, we have a dedicated team working to encourage researchers to enter into partnerships with the private sector in order to find concrete applications for their research, which is very rewarding. The ultimate goal is to support them right through to patent registration.

Another action increasing visibility of research output is the yearly "**Open day**". This day exists at national level and is called "Science Day", during which our researchers welcome young and less young to talk about their work and research. It's always a great success, but it's made possible by extensive prior exchanges with schools and high schools in Lyon.

SG4 - Increasing knowledge and leadership capabilities of researchers and supporting staff

Objective 1: Identify skills and knowledge gaps in areas such as proposal development, grant management, and transversal skills

A preliminary subject mapping was completed based on the Needs Analysis performed at the beginning of the BIOLAWEB project (WP 5, Task 5.1). A new additional questionnaire will be formulated, and additional surveys will be conducted annually in order to gather the information necessary to identify knowledge and skill gaps, which will be subsequently used to create a list of tailor-made courses and trainings in areas such as proposal development, grant management, and transversal skills. In addition to this, a number of face-to-face meetings and interviews with researchers will be carried out, and partners from already established and acknowledged research support offices will be consulted on their training practices and subject matter courses.

Objective 2: Offer training opportunities to research personnel for their ongoing professional growth

A continuation and expected outcome of this objective is a short list of tailored courses that are sustainable with the financial and human resources available. The short list will be decided between the ICPO, financial, legal, and technology transfer units, along with the institute leadership, and the focus will be placed on what the priorities are for upskilling researchers. The training programme provided by INRAE and the webinars run to date by ICPO and through the BIOLAWEB project provide initial steps about what can be feasibly delivered. Depending on the subject matter and degree of specialisation (e.g., IPR, technology transfer, patenting), it may occasionally be preferable for external service providers to conduct particular courses or sessions. Research coordinators will be given access to a draft of the programme in order to provide feedback on the content and identify any important curriculum deficiencies.

There may be difficulties in synchronising the availability of the UB-ICTM ICPO, legal, financial, and technology transfer teams to deliver joint, more comprehensive trainings. This will be mitigated by either delivering separate trainings or delaying or rescheduling some to accommodate everyone's availability. Another potential risk could be a lack of financial resources to support the expected training by external providers. This will be minimised by finding and scheduling free webinars and online trainings on the desired topics (e.g., sufficient resources are available at the Streaming Service of the European Commission and the EU Science & Innovation YouTube channel) first until adequate funding is available to implement the paid ones or to have external experts on site and accessible for Q&A.

Objective 3: Encourage peer collaboration focused on the development of proposals

This objective is rather important because it could fundamentally alter the UB-ICTM collegial culture and work environment. The planned action is based on the utilisation of inner strengths and concentrates on some preliminary early steps that will be expanded upon in the following period (two organised internal seminars related to the calls of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia: "Promis 2023" for early-stage researchers held on May 31st, 2023 (in person) and "Proof of Concept", an online event held on September 6th, 2023). It has also been decided that similar events will be organised whenever possible for all following calls.

The topic of internal peer review culture is also recognised as highly beneficial for researchers. UB-ICTM lacks such a culture and working practices, and official peer review processes are almost non-existent. It is well acknowledged that one of the best ways to acquire the required skills for preparing quality proposals is to share knowledge, expertise, and experience. Researchers can develop these abilities the most through first-hand experience, feedback from successful and unsuccessful applications, and comments from peers. The main aim of this objective is to promote a culture of support and sharing, and our intention is to utilise this culture shift founded on increased knowledge and experience exchange to develop a more cooperative approach to the preparation of research grants throughout the Institute.

The development of a peer-to-peer sharing culture will undoubtedly be helped by regular meetings of motivated and dedicated group of research coordinators, which is how Objective 3 and SG1 Objective 2 are related. The majority of ICPO's involvement would be in supporting and facilitating events and actions.

INRAE Best Practice

The Lyon-Grenoble Centre's management team has set up a small budget dedicated to training Support Service staff. Every year, staff are encouraged to update their knowledge and skills by attending paid training courses. It may seem laborious, but it's a necessity.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

8. Action plan for the development of ICPO for the period 2024 - 2028.

Actions		Indicators of progress	Deadline
SG1 - Streamlining UB-ICTM research support services and post-award management			
1.1. Ensuring that appropriate support to proposals is provided at the right stage			
1.1.1.	Create an online form for project proposal identification to simplify the application process	The project proposal ID form completed and operational on the institution's website	March 2024
1.1.2.	Include specific questions into the online ID form concerning the nature and extent of the required support, as well as the timing and project phase during which it is needed	Number of project applications provided through the ID form that include required support information	March 2024
1.1.3.	Recruit assistant directors, department heads, scientific council members, and ICPO staff to raise awareness about the significance and intent of the ID form	Percentage of the project applications reported through the ID form in relation to the overall number of project proposals submitted by the Institute	March 2024
1.2. Introducing and organizing regular meetings of ICPO staff with stakeholders			
1.2.1.	Identify and create network of research coordinators within the Institute	Number of research coordinators that have been designated	June 2024
1.2.2.	Establish a timetable for recurrent meetings (e.g., every 1-2 months)	Consistent attendance at the scheduled meetings is documented through attendance lists, agendas, photographs, and similar records	June 2024
1.3. Closer collaboration and better coordination between the research support services (ICPO, legal, finance, and technology transfer)			
1.3.1.	Assess existing research support services' staff expertise and know-how concerning research contracts and financial matters	One survey for the assessment of existing staff competencies and skills in relation to procedures, contracts, and financial matters has been carried out	December 2024
1.3.2.	On site training of ICPO staff in project support and administration at partner institution (INRAE), short term visit and expert visit from partner institution	Number of ICPO staff who completed training in project support and administration at INRAE and/or during expert visit from partner institution	December 2024

		The Joint Grant Agreement Procedure (GAP) has been established	2026
1.3.3.	Create joint procedures for research support services	ICPO report exploring possible further collaborative procedures, such as the Consortium Agreement and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	2027

1.4. Streamlining post-award and monitoring processes

1.4.1.	Using full potential of the Institute's website and the project proposal ID form, to collect data regarding the progress of awarded projects and grants	An additional section has been added to the project ID form to incorporate post-award project information	December 2024

1.5. Ensuring that ICPO and other UB-ICTM research support services have capacity to manage the workload

1.5.1.	Create a range of potential solutions or strategies to optimize workload and explore possible commercial software or IT solutions that match the requirements of UB-ICTM	Outline of prospective solutions, concepts, and software (including pros and cons of each and cost) is incorporated in an annual ICPO report to the management	December 2026
1.5.2.	Conduct regular meetings with management to explain the challenges, workload implications, and propose potential solutions	A meeting has taken place with UB-ICTM management to discuss the matter	March 2024
1.5.3.	Management executes the most fitting changes as agreed upon	A new staff member has been recruited within the ICPO or adequate IT solutions have been found, and tasks have been reallocated to other capable research support services (e.g., contracts directed to the legal office)	December 2024

SG2 - Creating alliances and collaborations

2.1. Establish and cultivate a professional network for the ICPO

2.1.1.	Identifying additional national and European institutions renowned for their robust research support offices in the realm of European funding	Initiated contact with 3-4 acknowledged research support offices	December 2025

2.2. Cultivate an environment where researchers actively engage in sharing networks and forming collaborations

2.2.1.	Integrate this into the agendas of routine meetings for research coordinators and research leaders, incorporating case studies	Consistent participation in scheduled meetings, with a dedicated agenda item for focused research topics (e.g., water quality monitoring)	June 2024
2.2.2.	Initiate or support organization of an internal UB-ICTM academic event (workshop or annual conference) featuring presentations and demonstrations	An internal annually recurring academic event has been established	December 2024

2.3. Encourage international research partnerships

| 2.3.1. | Identify existing partnerships and opportunities for establishing new ones | ICPO has compiled a list of existing international partnerships and periodically distributes information on available opportunities for making new contacts and partnerships | December 2024 |
| | | Researchers participate in at least three info days or EU brokerage events focused on relevant topics | December 2024 |

SG3 - Improving the visibility of research outputs

3.1. Present funded research both internally within the organization and to external audiences

| 3.1.1. | Continuously updating a funded project list and increasing its visibility on the institutional website | The existing list has been revised and brought up-to-date | 2026 and ongoing |
| 3.1.2. | Creating and continuously updating "Achievements" section of ICPO web page | Triumphal case-studies have been posted in the "News" section of the Institute's website and "Achievements" section on ICPO web page | June 2024 |

3.2. Increase the external visibility of UB-ICTM's research outputs, highlighting academic success stories and noteworthy projects

3.2.1.	Collaborate and communicate with UB-ICTM PR person to generate media reports derived from relevant activities, meetings and events, and set up a procedure for researchers to contribute inputs	Enhanced visibility on the website and across social media platforms, documented with quantifiable metrics including the frequency of posts on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Additionally, the number of appearances on TV, radio, and local news is also tracked	March 2024
		Established procedure for researchers to contribute inputs	March 2024
		Number of assistances provided by ICPO in this process	June 2024

SG4 - Increasing knowledge and leadership capabilities of researchers and supporting staff

4.1. Identify skills and knowledge gaps in areas such as proposal development, grant management, and transversal skills

4.1.1.	Carry out a survey	A questionnaire has been formulated and one survey conducted	March 2024 - ongoing annually
4.1.2.	Hold face-to-face meetings and interviews	Number of researchers and stuff members who completed the survey and attended interviews	
4.1.3.	Consult partners form acknowledged research support offices on their training practices and subject-matter courses	Consultations made with partners from 3-4 acknowledged national and international research support offices	December 2024

4.2. Offer training opportunities to research personnel for their ongoing professional growth

4.2.1.	Create a training program tailored according to researchers needs identified in a yearly survey	A preliminary training program has been formulated through collaboration with researchers, with a focal point on proposal development with proposed external/internal courses and a list of potential external experts	June 2024
4.2.2.	Determine the most suitable approach, whether internal or external courses, based on the specific context and needs		
4.2.3.	Organize specialized trainings	One training has been organized collaboratively with the participation of ICPO, finance, legal, and technology transfer departments and/or external experts	December 2024
4.3. Encourage peer collaboration focused on the development of proposals			
4.3.1.	Engaging researchers who are willing to contribute their successful proposals, expertise, and experiences in providing the internal UB-ICTM (in-house) training	Number of researchers participating in delivering the training	Within year 1 of the project
		Organizing in collaboration with finance, legal, technology transfer, and ICPO a minimum of one workshop (or several seminars for each opened major call for projects) where researchers share their experiences	Within year 1 of the project

9. ICPO activities in 2023.

PRE-ACTIVITIES

October 2022. The first visit and training held by INRAE experts to the administrative staff and researchers of the BIOLAWEB project.

December 2022. The International Cooperation and Project Office (ICPO) was created

APPENDIX 2

Screening Questionnaire for International Projects

February 2023. In collaboration with experts from INRAE (research administration staff), a qualitative survey was conducted to identify the needs, skills and competencies required by UB-ICTM research staff for the newly established research administration support unit. The results of the survey were analysed and used as an auxiliary indicator in the formulation of appropriate procedures for the development of ICPO.

The survey was conducted as part of the promotion of the International cooperation research office (ICPO) and 176 researchers gave their answers to the questions (82.24% of the total research staff). Questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Total number of ICTM researchers	214	100,00%
Researchers that filled out the survey	176	82,24%
Researchers that didn't filled out the survey	38	17,76%

SURVEY RESULTS: Needs analysis

Part One: Interest in participating in projects – bidding and participating in projects in the past five years and plans for the future

Questions:

1. Did you ***apply*** for any international research project call recently?
2. Indicate the types of programs/project calls for which you have ***applied*** during the last 5 years (2018-2023).
3. Did you ***take part*** in any international research projects (incl. bilateral, COST etc.) recently?
4. Indicate all the types of programs/project calls in which you have ***participated*** during the last 5 years (2018-2023).
5. Do you ***plan to apply*** for any international project call in 2023?
6. Indicate all the types of programs/project calls you ***plan to apply*** for in 2023.
7. How likely are you to apply as ***a project coordinator*** for HORIZON EUROPE projects (e.g. RIA, CSA, MSCA, ERC, IA, EIC) in 2023?

Interest in participating in projects

Plan to apply for any int. res. projects in 2023.
80 | 134

Take part in any int. res. projects in last 3 years
109 | 105

Apply for any int. res. projects in last 5 years
98 | 116

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ YES ■ NO

Project types

- None
- Some other prog.
- Postdoc. Fell.
- Science Fund RS
- NATO
- Bilateral
- ERASMUS +
- COST
- HORIZON
- H2020

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

■ Plan to apply in 2023. ■ Participated during the last 5 years ■ Applied during the last 5 years

D5.1 The Strategy and AP for ICPO

www.biolaweb.com

Part Two: Needs, skills and competencies required by UB-ICTM research staff

Questions:

8. Indicate the **main obstacles** to achieving better success in international project applications for you.
9. Indicate which **skills/competencies** staff working in the International Cooperation and Project Office at UB-ICTM should improve to help researchers.
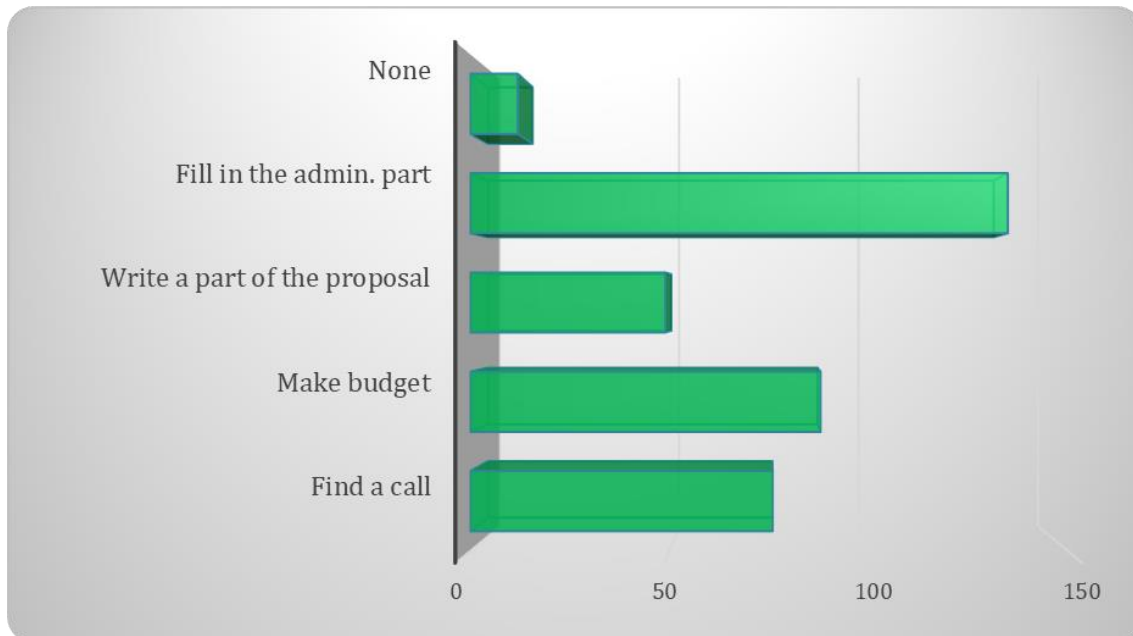
10. Indicate the **types of events** related to international project calls/programs in which you would like to participate by the end of 2023.

D5.1 The Strategy and AP for ICPO

www.biolaweb.com
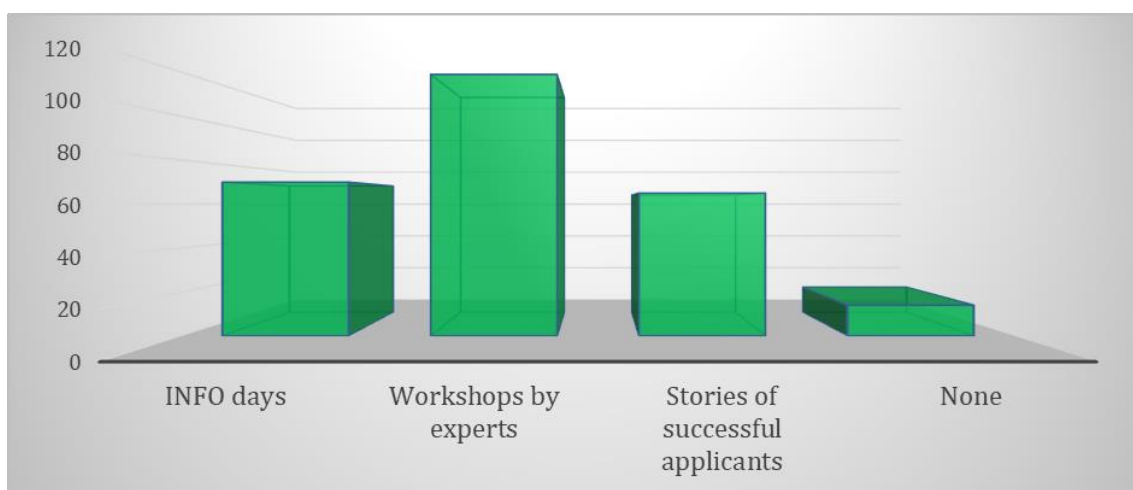
Part Three: Knowledge about HE projects and scientific interest

11. Did you identify calls within the HORIZON program that you would like to apply for this year?
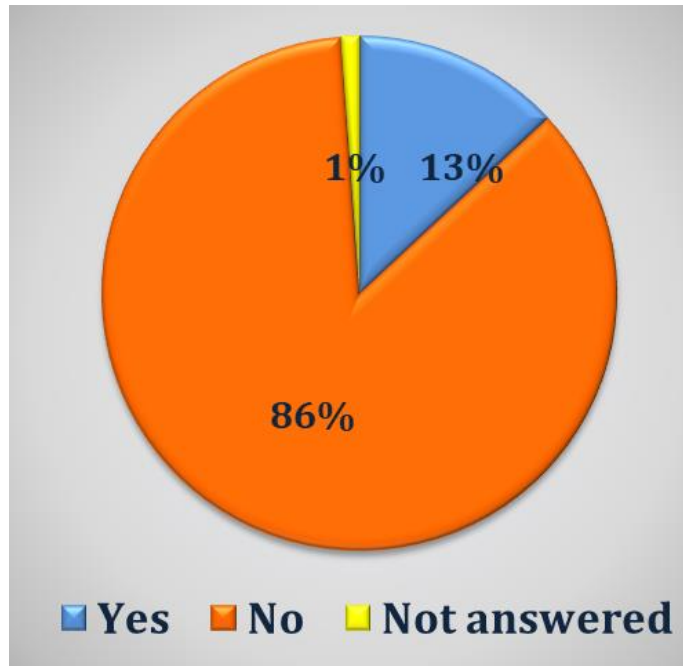
12. Tick the box(es) below to indicate the program part.

'
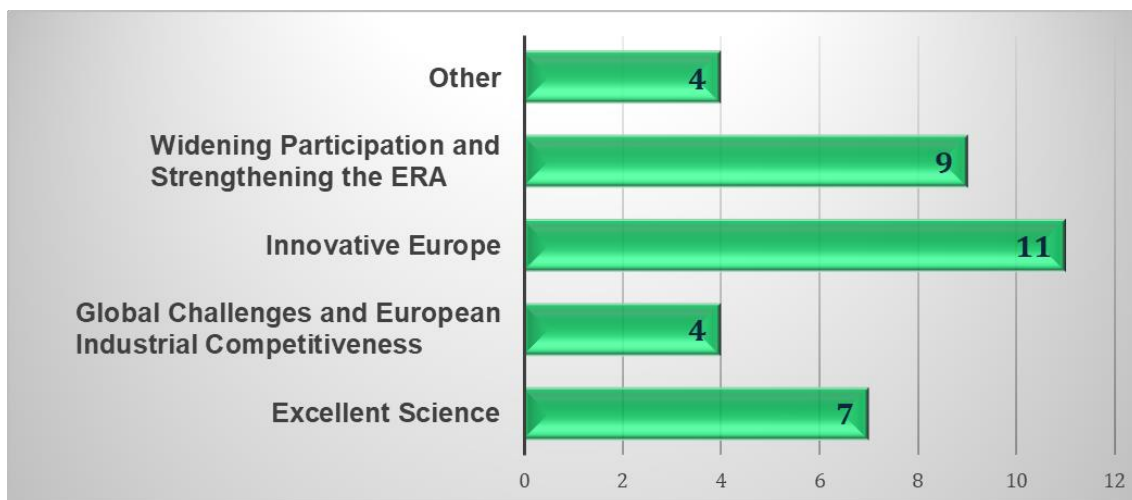
13. Tick the boxes below to indicate clusters of pillar II for which you plan to apply.
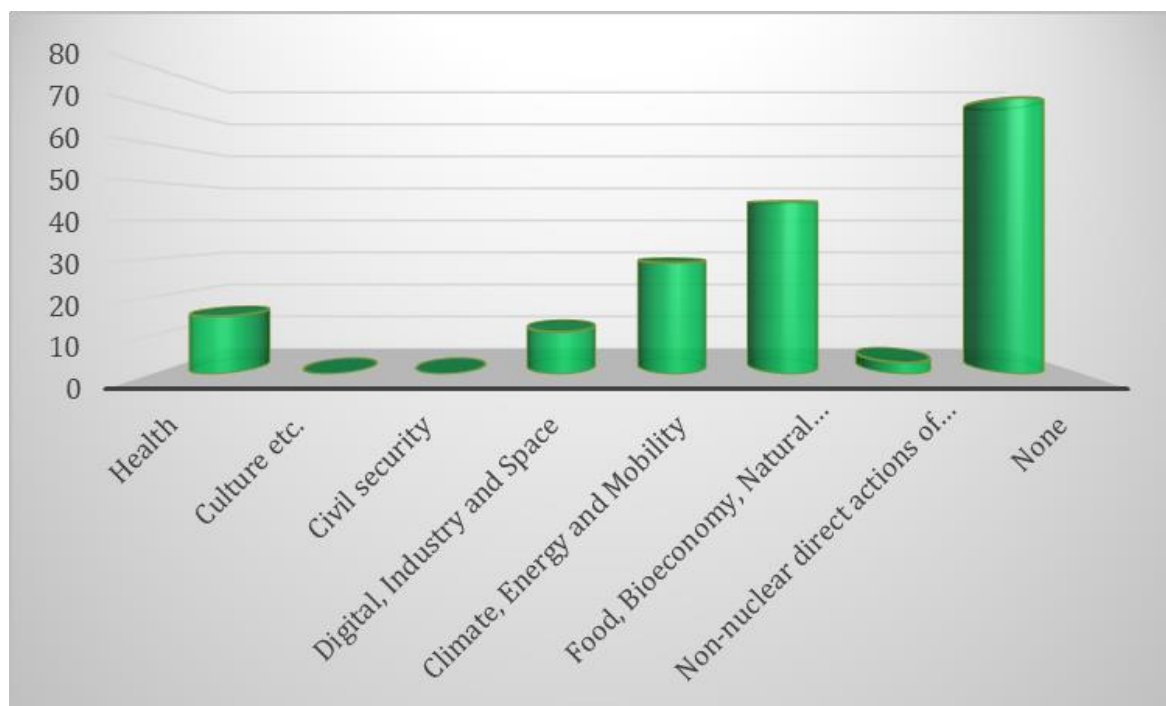
Conclusion: With the survey we also managed to identify our potential leaders.

All the types of programs/project calls researchers **plan to apply** for in 2023.	
HORIZON	**34**
COST	15
ERASMUS +	18
Bilateral	48
NATO	5
Science Fund RS	78
Postdoc. Fell.	**12**
Some other programs/projects	29
None	53

How likely are you to apply as **a project coordinator** for HORIZON EUROPE projects (e.g. RIA, CSA, MSCA, ERC, IA, EIC) in 2023?	
Very likely	**11**
Likely	20
I am not sure	49
Not likely	50
Certainly not	43

APPENDIX 3

April 4th – 6th 2023. Workshop on Horizon Europe programme and projects organized at UB-ICTM Belgrade through BIOLAWEB European Twinning project, held by experts from INRAE.

DAY 2 (Tuesday 4th April) 10:00 – 17:00		
Conference room, 2nd floor		
WORKSHOP		
How to build a competitive proposal to Horizon Europe, by Louise Vaast		
10:00 – 10:05	Welcome and introductions Dragana Zlatović, project officer at ICPO*, WP5 leader, UB-ICTM	

10:05 – 12:35	How to build a competitive proposal (I) (T5.4.1 + T5.4.2)
	
	- General Framework of the Horizon Europe Program
	- Study Case: How to fill in a proposal
	- With focus on Key Issue
	  o Gender Equality Plan
	  o The principle of Open Science
	  o The notion of ethics
		Targeted public:
		ALL

12:35 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 16:00	How to build a competitive proposal (II) (T5.4.1 + T5.4.2)	
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee break	
16:15 – 17:00	How to build a competitive proposal (III) (T5.4.1 + T5.4.2)	
17h:00	End of day 2	

DAY 3 (Wednesday 5th April) 10:00 – 17:00		
Conference room, 2nd floor		
WORKSHOP		
Training in financial management and project reporting, by Antoine Moatti		
10:00 – 10:05	*Welcome and introductions* *Katarina Milanović, Finance project administrator at ICPO, UB-ICTM*	
10:05 – 12:35	*Training in financial management and project reporting (I) (T5.4.4)* - Focusing on the understanding of Horizon Europe rules, diffusing this knowledge in your organisation and on defining the process in order to manage Horizon Europe Grants	**Targeted public:** ICPO's admin
12:35 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 16:00	*Training in financial management and project reporting (II) (T5.4.4)* - (UE Portal) - Case study regarding HE management grants	**Targeted public:** ICPO's admin
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee break	
16:15 – 17:00	*Discussions on the tools put in place within the UB-ICTM (T5.4.4)*	**Targeted public:** ICPO's admin

DAY 4 (Thursday 6th April) 10:00 – 16:00		
WORKSHOP		
Focus on specific item, by Hervé Dumont		
10:00 – 10:05	*Welcome and introductions* *Vladan Ćosović, head of ICPO, UB-ICTM*	
10:05 – 11:05	*How to prepare and negotiate a consortium agreement (T5.4.1)*	**Targeted public:** ICPO's team
11:05 – 11:35	*Video conference with M Thibault Datry (experienced researcher at INRAE)*	**Targeted public:** ALL
11:35 – 12:35	*Other European programs such as INTERREG MTA, APA and Nagoya protocol*	**Targeted public:** All
12:35 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 15:00	*Experience feedback by INRAE researchers (T5.4.1 + T5.4.2)* *(Video conference with Frédérick Rimet and Agnès Bouchez)*	**Targeted public:** Researchers
15:00 – 16:00	*Action Plan for improving administration skills and formulating strategy for developing IRMO (T5.3)* - Wrap up	**Targeted public:** BIOLAWEB coordinator + ICPO's team
16h:00	End of day 4	

May 5th 2023. Internal UB-ICTM online seminars (Google Meet) on preparation and writing of Horizon Europe projects

Topics:

Introduction to Horizon Europe projects and other EU funding programs;
Form and content: rules and recommendations for writing successful project proposals;
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – MSCA.
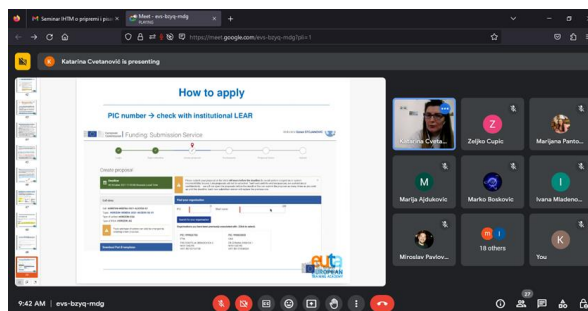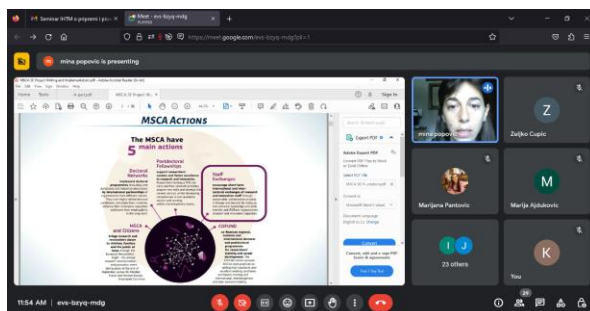
May 5th 2023. Internal UB-ICTM online seminars (Google Meet) on preparation and writing of Horizon Europe projects

Topics:

Budget of Horizon projects,
Impact section –How to write impact;
Implementation of Horizon projects.
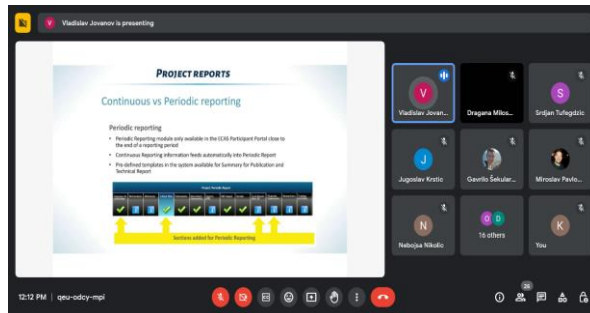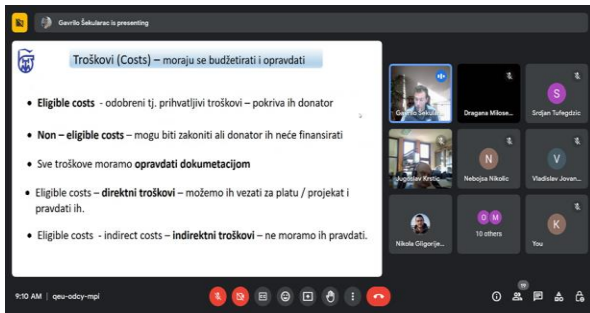
May 31st 2023. Internal UB-ICTM seminar for young Ph.D. researchers, related to the recent call of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia for early-stage researchers (Promis 2023).
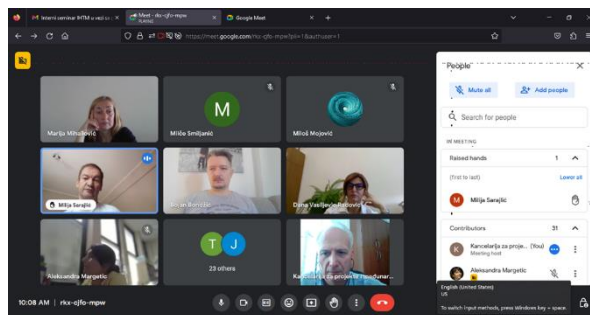
September 6th 2023. Internal UB-ICTM seminar online (Google Meet) related to the Proof of concept call of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (Dokaz koncepta, 2023).

October 9th – 11th 2023. Blue Green Future (BgF) Summer school – second part held at UB-ICTM Belgrade through the BIOLAWEB European Twinning project, organized by ICPO staff

More than 40 participants attended BgF Summer school (second part) and 12 lecturers gave their presentations.

BIOLAWEB

Registartion form for Blue Green Future (BgF) Summer school second part

Blue Green Future (BgF) Summer school second part

On behalf of the BIOLAWEB consortium, we have the pleasure and honor of inviting you to the second part of the BgF Summer school, taking place at the University of Belgrade, Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy - National Institute of the Republic of Serbia (UBICTM), from October 09–11, 2023.

During the BgF Summer school you can attend:

Workshop 1:

- Project management: types of projects and the process of writing project proposals by Dragana Zlatović, MSc, B.Ec. and Vladan Ćosović, PhD (UBICTM)
- Finances in HE projects by Katarina Milanović, B.Ec. (UBICTM)
- Lump Sum in HE projects by Tanja Božić, B.Sc. (Faculty of Chemistry, Belgrade)

Workshop 2:

- Examples of good practice - successful stories and panel discussion by Miloš Ćirić, PhD and Marija Lješević; PhD (UBICTM), Milena Čavić, PhD (The Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia - IORS), Biljana Basarin, PhD and Msc Gordana Vlahović (University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences – UNSPMF)

Workshop 3:

- Preparation and evaluation of the project by Sanja Vraneš, PhD, World Bank expert for the reform of the scientific and research sector and a member of the United Nations advisory body on technical cooperation (*Standing Advisory group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation*)
- Open science by Matija Zlatar, PhD (UBICTM)

We are cordially inviting scientists, students and stakeholders to participate in this part of the BgF Summer school where they will have a great opportunity to expand their knowledge in order to successfully apply for projects.

All collected information will be kept confidential and will not be shared with third parties.

Registration is open until September 25th. The number of places is limited.

Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions: icpo@ihtm.bg.ac.rs.

We look forward to welcoming you!

BIOLAWEB Team and ICPO

Name and surname *

Short answer text

Job Title / Scientific position *

Short answer text

Affiliation / Institution *

Short answer text

E-mail *

Short answer text

Workshop 1 (October 9, at UBICTM) *

○ I will attend

○ I will not attend

Workshop 2 (October 10, at UBICTM) *

○ I will attend

○ I will not attend

Workshop 3 (October 11, at UBICTM) *

○ I will attend

○ I will not attend

Your dietary restrictions

○ None

○ Vegetarian

○ Vegan

○ Gluten-free

○ Other…

BgF summer school (WP3)

Second part 9th – 11th October 2023, Belgrade

Agenda

DAY 1 (9th October) 09:00 – 14:30
The Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy - National Institute of the Republic of Serbia (UB-ICTM, Serbia), Conference room, 2nd floor, Njegoševa 12, Belgrade, Serbia

Time	Activity
09:00 – 09:50	**Registration of participants**
09:50 – 10:00	*Welcome speech* Dr Predrag Banković, assistant director for international cooperation, UB-ICTM Dr Miloš Ćirić, coordinator of the BIOLAWEB project, UB-ICTM
10:00 – 10:30	*Project management and the types of projects* Dragana Zlatović, MSc, B.Ec., leader WP5 of the BIOLAWEB project, UB-ICTM
10:30 – 11:05	*Maximizing the impact and visibility of the research project* Dr Vladan Čosović, Head of ICPO, UB-ICTM
11:05 – 11:15	*Discussion*
11:15 – 11:45	Coffee break
11:45 – 12:30	*Finances in HE projects and discussion* Katarina Milanović, B.Ec., Finance project administrator, UB-ICTM
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 14:30	*Lump Sum in HE projects and discussion* Tatjana Božić, B.Sc., Coordinator for International Projects, UB Faculty of Chemistry, Belgrade

DAY 2 (10th October) 09:00 – 14:00
The Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy - National Institute of the Republic of Serbia (UB-ICTM, Serbia), Conference room, 2nd floor, Njegoševa 12, Belgrade, Serbia

Time	Activity
09:00 – 09:30	**Registration of participants**
09:30 – 09:35	*Welcome speech* Dr Vladan Čosović, Head of ICPO, UB-ICTM
09:35 – 09:50	*Presentation BIOLAWEB Project* Dr Miloš Ćirić, Coordinator of the BIOLAWEB project, UB-ICTM
09:50 – 10:15	*Presentation PhytoPFAS and PFAStwin Projects* Dr Marija Lješević, PhytoPFAS project manager and WP2 leader, UB-ICTM
10:15 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 11:00	*Presentation STEPUPIORS Project* Dr Milena Čavić, Coordinator of the STEPUPIORS project, The Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia (IORS)
11:00 – 11:20	*Presentation ExtremeClimTwin Project* Dr Biljana Basarin, Coordinator of the ExtremeClimTwin project, University of Novi Sad Faculty of Sciences (UNSPMF)
11:20 – 11:50	*Successful story of University of Novi Sad Faculty of Sciences* MSc Gordana Vlahović, Head of International Relations Office Horizon Europe NCP for ERC & Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions University of Novi Sad Faculty of Sciences (UNSPMF)
11:50 – 12:50	Lunch break
12:50 – 14:00	*Panel discussion – examples of good practice – successful stories* Dr Miloš Ćirić and Dr Marija Lješević (UB-ICTM), Dr Milena Čavić (IORS), Dr Biljana Basarin and MSc Gordana Vlahović (UNSPMF)

DAY 3 (11th October) 09:00 – 14:35
The Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy - National Institute of the Republic of Serbia (UB-ICTM, Serbia), Conference room, 2nd floor, Njegoševa 12, Belgrade, Serbia

Time	Activity
09:00 – 09:30	**Registration of participants**
09:30 – 09:35	*Welcome speech* Dragana Zlatović, MSc, B.Ec., WP5 leader of the BIOLAWEB project, UB-ICTM
09:35 – 10:45	*Project proposals from the evaluator's point of view and discussion* Dr Sanja Vraneš, Expert of the European Commission and of the World Bank - National Institutional consultant (NIC) within SAIGE project
10:45 – 11:15	Coffee break
11:15 – 12:00	*Examples of good practice and INRAE organisation and discussion* Hervé Dumont, Head of Partnership and Project Engineering Department, INRAE
12:00 – 12:30	*Examples of good practice and NIVA organisation and discussion* Dr Susanne Schneider, senior scientist, NIVA
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 14:30	*Open science and discussion* Dr Matija Zlatar, Coordinator of Transformation Team, UB-ICTM
14:30 – 14:35	*Closing* Dr Miloš Ćirić, UB-ICTM Dragana Zlatović, MSc, B.Ec., *UB-ICTM*

First Day

Second Day

Third day

Evaluation form

BgF Summer School (WP3)
Second part 9th – 11th October 2023, Belgrade

1. Which of the presentations held on the first day of the BgF Summer school (October 9th) benefited you the most:

2. Please rate the relevance and usefulness of each of the presentations (on a scale of 1 to 5)
   - Project management
   - Maximizing the impact and visibility of the research project
   - Finances in HE projects
   - Lump Sum in HE projects

3. Do you think that the presentations of successful stories of project coordinators are useful and to what extent (circle the answer)
   → Not useful at all
   → Not useful enough
   → I have no opinion
   → Useful
   → Very useful

4. Do you think that the concept of panel discussion and opportunities to exchange experiences is useful and educational (circle the answer)
   → Not useful and educational at all
   → Slightly useful and educational
   → I have no opinion
   → It is useful and educational
   → It is very useful and educational

5. Do you think and to what extent is the presentation Project proposals from the evaluator's point of view useful (circle the answer)
   → Not useful at all
   → Not useful enough
   → I have no opinion
   → Useful
   → Very useful

6. Do you think and to what extent is the Open science presentation useful? (circle the answer)
   → Not useful at all
   → Not useful enough
   → I have no opinion
   → Useful
   → Very useful

7. Do you think that and to what extent the presentations of foreign partner organizations are educational and will benefit you (circle the answer)
   → They were mot educational and will not benefit me at all
   → They were not educational enough and will not benefit me enough
   → I have no opinion
   → They were educational and will benefit me
   → They were very educational and will benefit me a lot

8. Rate the complete organization and concept of BgF Summer school - second part held in the period 09th – 11th October (with a rating from 1 to 5)

9. Your comments about the workshop

10. At the next workshops, I would like the following topics to be covered

Results of the evaluation form

| Evaluation form filled by:	
Student	1
Junior Research Assistant	
Research Assistant	2
Assistant	1
Research Associate	10
Senior Research Associate	8
Principal Research Fellow	2
Administrative staff	1
Undeclared	5
TOTAL	**30**

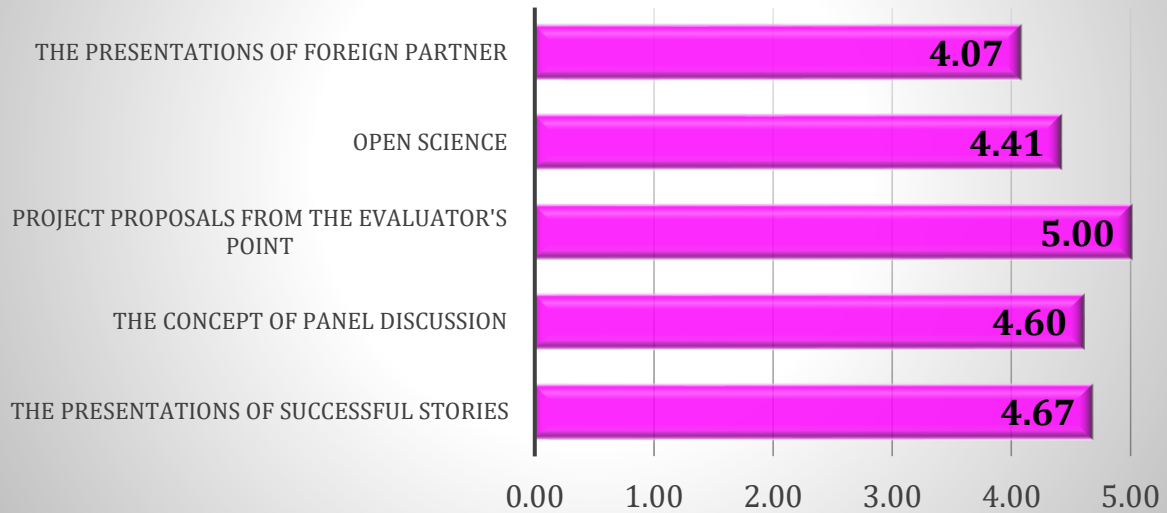## The most useful presentation on the first day BgF Summer school
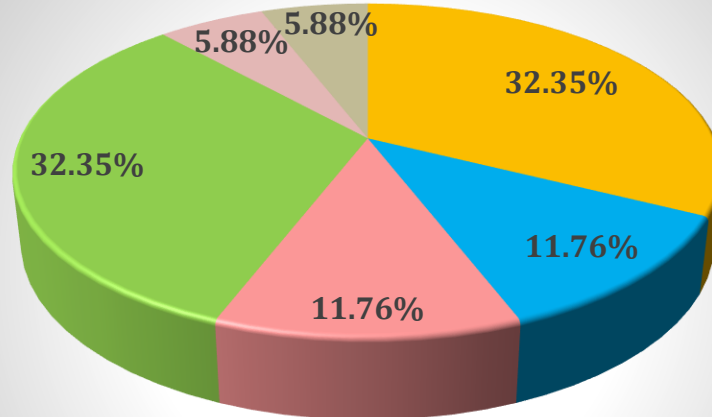
- Project management and the types of projects
- Maximizing the impact and visibility of the res. project
- Finances in HE projects

Ratings of relevance and usefulness of presentations on the first day

Presentation	Rating
LUMP SUM IN HE PROJECTS	4.90
FINANCES IN HE PROJECTS	4.68
MAXIMIZING THE IMPACT AND VISIBILITY OF THE RES. PROJECT	4.83
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND THE TYPES OF PROJECTS	4.77
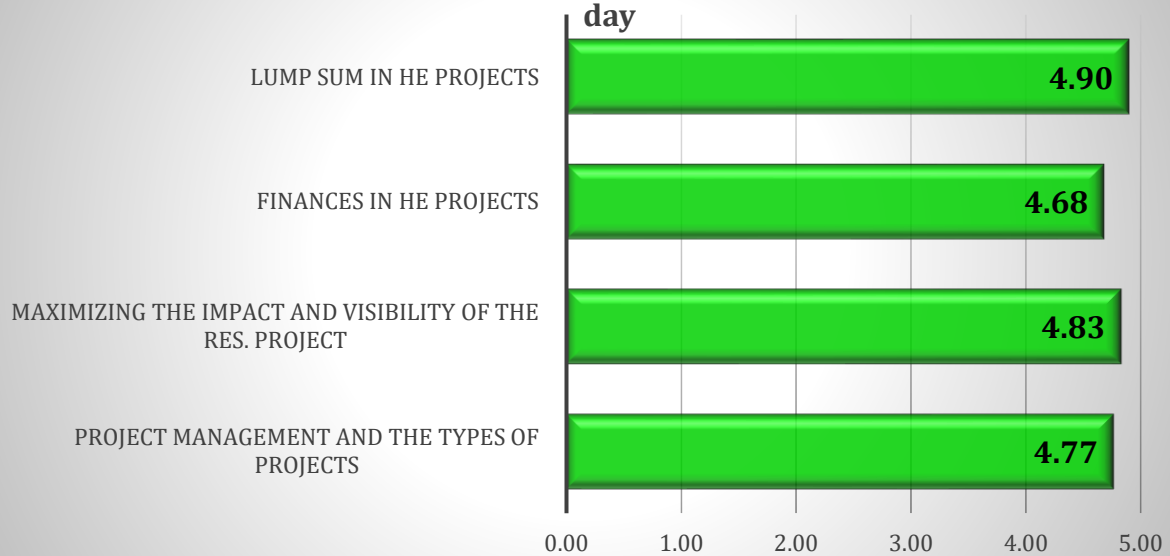
Evaluations of the relevance and usefulness of the presentations held on the second and third day

THE PRESENTATIONS OF FOREIGN PARTNER	4.07
OPEN SCIENCE	4.41
PROJECT PROPOSALS FROM THE EVALUATOR'S POINT	5.00
THE CONCEPT OF PANEL DISCUSSION	4.60
THE PRESENTATIONS OF SUCCESSFUL STORIES	4.67

0.00   1.00   2.00   3.00   4.00   5.00

Evaluation of the complete organization and concept of the BgF Summer School - part two

Average mark 4,98

Mark 4,5   Mark 5

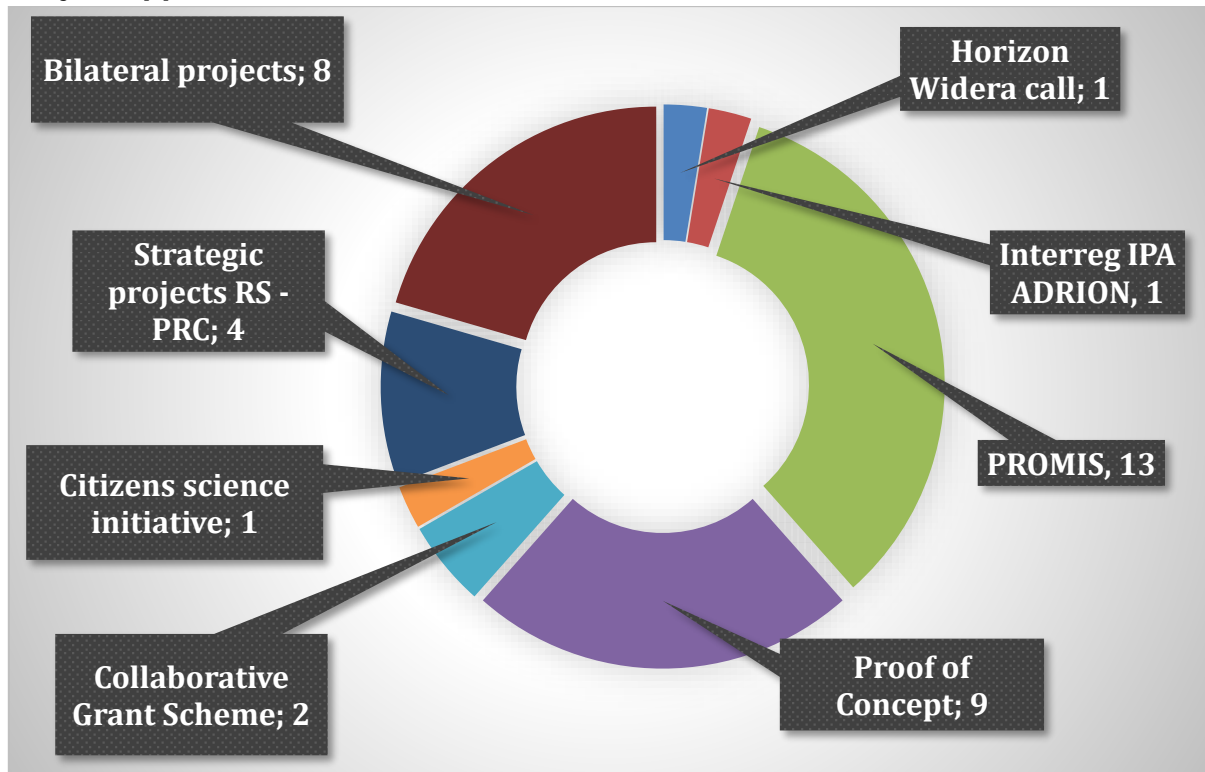| The most common comments from workshop attendees	
Useful, educational, informative, interesting	21
Excellent and timely well-conceived organization	20
Great lecturers	5
Professional, complex, usable knowledge	3
It provides a good basis and facilitates preparation for writing proposals for HE projects	2

Topics suggested for the next workshops

- Writing data management and CDE plans
- Project writing training - a detailed guide
- Implementation, project management, report writing
- Search calls and types of projects
- Preparation of project proposals
- How and where to look for partners for HE and IPA projects
- MSC Staff exchange and success stories
- Young researchers as project managers

2023 results in numbers

Project applications in 2023:

Projects approved in 2023: