Advancing Editorial Quality through Journal Certification: experiences of one national platform

SRCE – University of Zagreb University Computing Centre

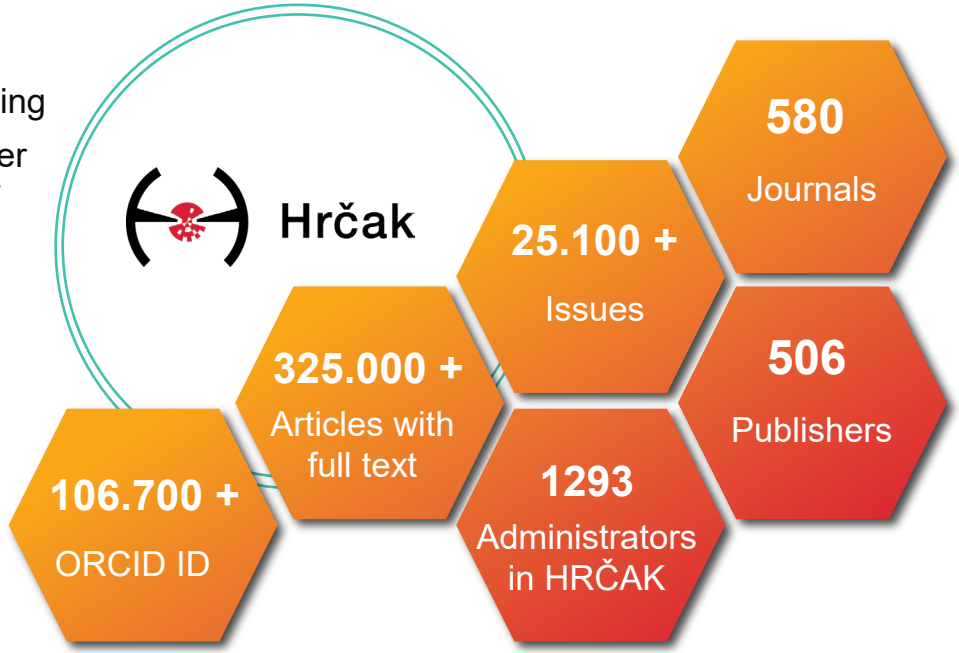
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HRČAK - Portal of Croatian scientific and professional journals

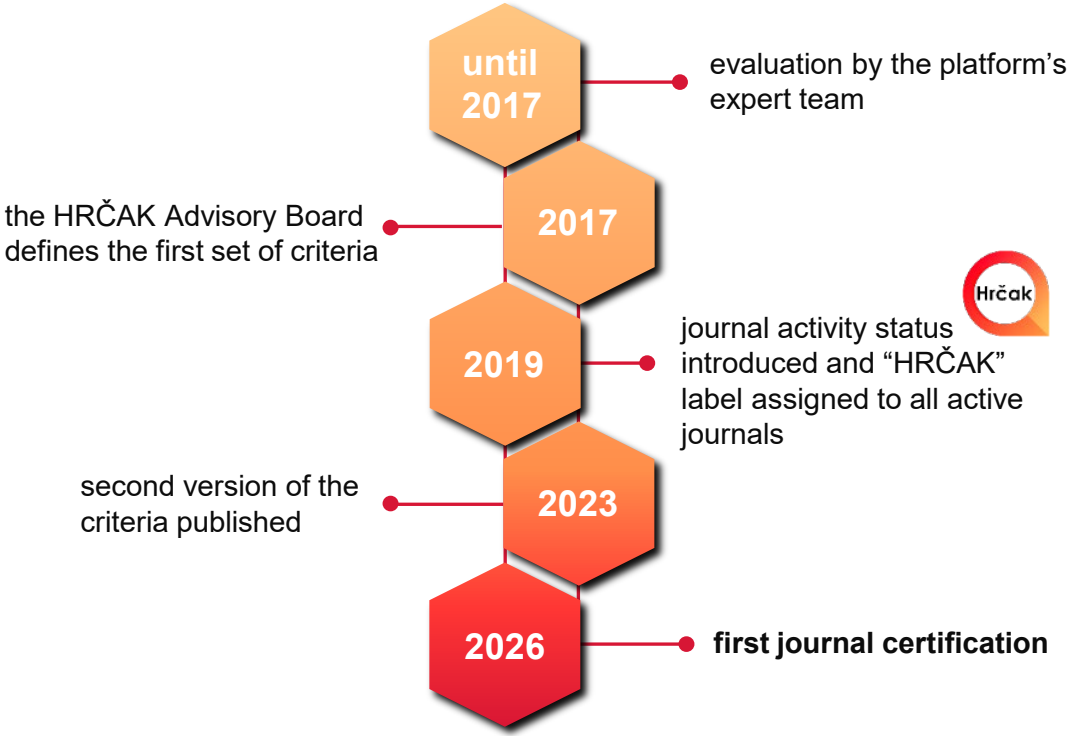
srce

- development, maintenance and hosting
- providing technical infrastructure, user support and ensuring interoperability and long-term accessibility
- 2006 - production
- HRČAK Advisory Board, community support...



Why certification?

JOURNAL EVALUATION:



THE AIM OF JOURNAL CERTIFICATION:

- to evaluate compliance with existing criteria
- to recognise and promote journals that demonstrate a particular high level of editorial quality and transparency
- ensuring continued compliance with quality standards and encouraging further improvement of editorial practices

The concept of certification was presented at several conferences and professional meetings, discussed with journal editors, and further refined based on feedback from the HRČAK Advisory Board.

Journal certification labels

Compliant with HRČAK criteria

(developed by HRČAK Advisory Board)

1. Status – active
2. Active editorial office contact email address
3. Open access to articles
4. Affiliation with the Republic of Croatia
5. Editorial team and editorial board
6. Instructions for authors
7. Peer review policy
8. Article categorization
9. Article information
10. Impressum

the criteria are available at: https://hrcak.srce.hr/en/kriteriji

Diamond Journal

(developed within the DIAMAS and CRAFT-OA projects; a condensed version of DOAS)

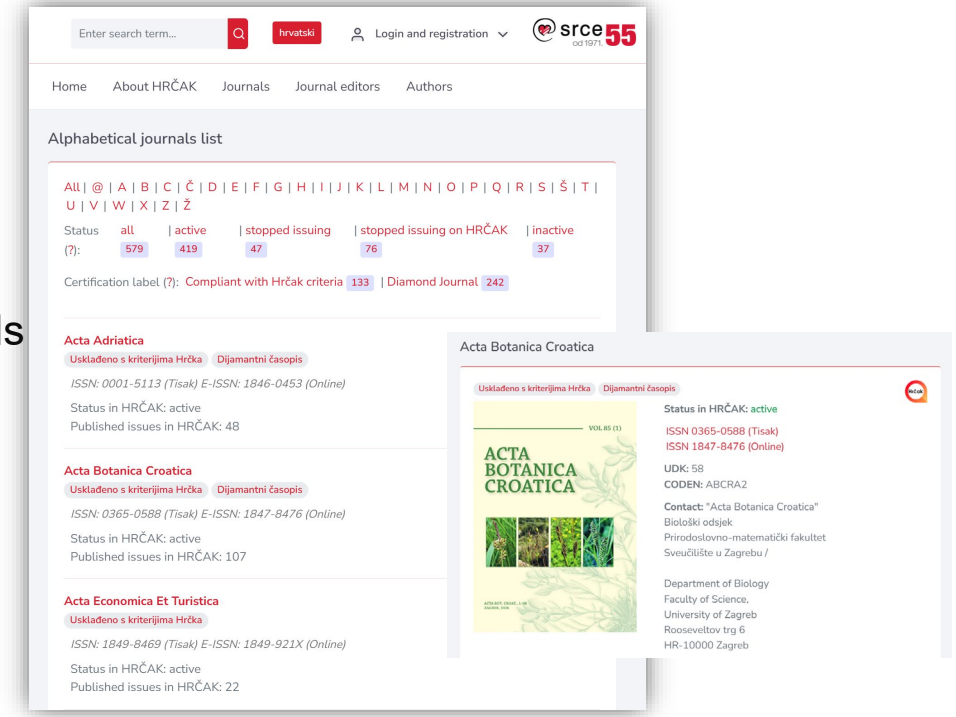
1. Status – active
2. Active editorial office contact email address
3. ISSN
4. Peer-reviewed scientific or professional journal
5. Open access to articles and publication under open licences
6. No publication charges for authors (APCs)
7. Open to all authors
8. Community-owned journal

the criteria are available at: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12721408

Results

- evaluation period: March – June 2026
- **400** active journals reviewed

- Compliant with HRČAK criteria: **133** journals
- Diamond Journal: **242** journals
- both labels: **116** journals



Display of certification labels on the HRČAK portal: in the journal list and on individual journal pages

Criterium	Number of journals that DO NOT meet the criterion (out of 400 active journals)	Most common reasons for non-compliance with the criteria
Article information	225	Lack of information on terms of use (licensing)
Impressum	169	Lack of information on terms of use (licensing)
Instructions for authors	168	Lack of information on terms of use (licensing) Lack of information on article retraction and correction procedures, ethical guidelines, conflict-of-interest management, etc.
No publication charges for authors (APCs)	124	Lack of information on fees
Open access to articles and publication under open licences	94	“Copyright protected”
Editorial team and editorial board	53	The editorial board does not list affiliations
Active editorial office contact email address	52	The address has not been confirmed
Article categorization	30	The article category is not indicated in the article (PDF)
Peer-reviewed scientific or professional journal	29	The journal uses editorial review only
Community-owned journal	18	The owner is a private institution
Open to all authors	17	Only works by students, doctoral candidates, etc. are published
Affiliation with the Republic of Croatia	4	The publisher is not based in Croatia, so its connection to Croatia needs to be confirmed
Open access to articles	0	
Peer review policy	0	
ISSN	0	

Lessons learned and next steps

- Benefits for journals editors
  - Educational value and improved understanding of publishing criteria
  - Encouraged editors to review and improve their editorial practices
  - Updated and more accurate journal information
- Benefits for HRČAK and scientific community
  - Improved quality and completeness of journal metadata
  - More consistent and reliable information across the portal
  - Improved discoverability of scholarly journals
  - Better basis for future evaluation and certification cycles
- Lessons learned
  - Improvement of the HRČAK metadata interface
  - Revision of criteria
  - Improvement of evaluation process
- What's next?
  - Next certification cycle planned for 2027
  - Collaboration with Croatian Centre for Diamond Open Access
  - Educational activities to support journals and editors

Thank you!

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