Zürcher Hochschule
für Angewandte Wissenschaften

zh aw

President's Office

ZHAW digital

Digital Futures Fund - 2024 Call for Projects

1. Goals and benefits

Under the title Digital Futures Fund (DFF) ZHAW digital aims to specifically support projects in the field of digital transformation. The DFF is open to all employees of ZHAW from the fields of education, research, management, and support who want to implement their project idea.

Applicants must be able to plausibly demonstrate that the implementation of this idea *either*:

a) creates overarching benefits (impact) *or*
b) represents an innovative step in the digital transformation (innovation).

Accordingly, there are two categories with different submission and selection procedures available. Applicants themselves decide which category (innovation or impact) is better suited for their application.

2. Categories

The following table serves as an orientation for selecting the category:

	Impact	Innovation
Benefit	Projects primarily generate broad, overarching benefits (e.g., for several organizational units of the ZHAW, society).	Projects generate benefits, but these are not necessarily overarching.
Reference to digital transformation	Projects deal with questions of digital transformation, but do not necessarily actively drive it forward.	Projects actively drive forward digital transformation.
Risk	The risk that the planned results will not be achieved is low.	Projects can be risky and the expected results may not be achieved. [1]
Results	Projects generate concrete, applicable and tangible results whose benefits are obvious.	Projects may generate results that are not directly applicable.
Comprehensibility and assessability	Projects are comprehensible to and can be evaluated by a broad community even without specific expertise.	Projects require in-depth expertise in order to be assessed, for which specialist consultants may have to be called in.
Examples	a) Workshop to show lecturers the possibilities of VR for teaching. b) Creation and provision of 3D images of all public spaces of the ZHAW. c) Browser game on the topic of "personal finances and avoiding debt" for primary school students. d) Mobile "e-Waste collection and information point" for cities.	a) Development of a cutting-edge learning technology. b) Development of a digital laboratory with remote experiments for a research group. c) AI-based software for automatically generating visual designs based on written documents. d) Mobile phone camera-based detection of cardiac arrhythmias.

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[1] However, this is not due to quality of work, lack of time or resources.

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Projects must be submitted to one of the two categories. Depending on the selected category the submission and selection process is organized differently. Guaranteed funding is available for both categories at the time of allocation.

3.   Project Submission

3.1   Formal criteria, application process and project duration

− Budget maximum of 20,000 CHF.
− Applications can be submitted until **15 November 2023, at 23:59** on zhawdigital.grantplatform.com (not compatible with Internet Explorer).
− Platform accounts must be opened with the ZHAW email address and full name.
− All entered information will be automatically saved once the first tab of the application is filled out.
− After submission, no further changes can be made.
− The funding decision will be communicated in January 2024.
− Project duration until the end of December 2024 at the latest.

3.2   General conditions

The following general conditions apply:

− A person may supervise a maximum of one project as project manager only. However, a person may be involved in any number of funded projects.[2]
− A project may not be entered into both categories at the same time.
− A DFF project must be coherent on its own. That means:
  o The results of the project must not be dependent on other (external or internal) funding, such as another DFF project or an SNF grant.
− In the case of projects with similar content, ZHAW digital reserves the right to impose conditions on cooperation.
− Projects that have not been previously funded can be resubmitted.

4.   Connection between DFF and Digital Futures Lab (DFL)

Membership in the DFL is not a prerequisite for submitting an application. However, successful applicants automatically become members of the DFL as important stakeholders in the ZHAW's digitization ecosystem, because:

− The DFL provides an environment from which ideas for DFF projects can emerge.
− The members are part of the evaluation panel.
− Exchanges and links between people involved in DFF projects are encouraged by the DFL.
− The results of the DFF projects are disseminated in the communication channels of the DFL.

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2 Also applies if the projects do not overlap in time.

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5. Assessment and selection process

5.1 Formal criteria and framework conditions

In the first step, the ZHAW Digital Office assesses whether an application meets the framework conditions and formal criteria, contains all necessary information, has a clear reference to digital transformation, and rejects applications if this is not the case.

This evaluation applies to both categories.

5.2 Category Impact

All applications in the category impact that pass the assessment by the Program Office automatically proceed to the next evaluation stage, which involves a voting in the Digital Futures Lab (analogous to the previous call).

Voting in the DFL is of central importance to ZHAW digital and embodies the principle of the desired bottom-up movement. Accordingly, ZHAW digital expects members of the DFL to actively consider their responsibility towards the community and ZHAW. This responsibility primarily entails voting for projects that best align with the goals and criteria of the DFF, even if these projects do not originate from their own domain.

The rules for voting are as follows:

− Each member receives 5 votes, which they can allocate to 5 projects.
− A maximum of one vote per project is permitted.
− It is allowed to vote for one's own project.
− The applications will be ranked based on the received votes. The ZHAW digital Board will decide up to which rank funding will be provided.

5.3 Category Innovation

The applications in the category innovation that pass the assessment by the Program Office automatically proceed to the next evaluation stage, which consists of an assessment by the ZHAW digital Board. The Board, as a committee, decides which applications should be funded.

6. Contact

All questions regarding the Digital Futures Fund and the submission platform can be directed to digital@zhaw.ch.

7. Future calls

Further DFF calls will be announced in the future, with ZHAW digital reserving the right to narrow down the themes of the calls and/or make other substantial changes to the DFF. Project proposals submitted after the deadline may not automatically be considered in the next call. They will need to be resubmitted during the next available submission period.

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Appendix: Questions in the application form[3]

A. Category Impact

– Details of applicant (name etc.)
– Language of the application
– Title (70)
– Abstract (300)
– Keywords (Max. 3 keywords, ordered from general to specific)
– Project category
  o Research
  o Education
  o Management/Support
– Project description (1000)
– How does the project relate to the topic of the call (digital transformation)? (400)
– What will the results of your project be? (400)
– What is the impact of your project's results and who will benefit from them? (400)
– What is the timeline of your project? What are significant milestones? (400)
– How are you going to disseminate the results at the end of the project? (400)
– Project members and their role
– Budget
  o Staff and material costs with brief justification (400)
– Project duration in months (must be completed by the end of 2024)
– Consent to general conditions

B. Category Innovation

– Details of applicant (name etc.)
– Language of the application
– Title
– Abstract (300)
– Keywords (Max. 3 keywords, ordered from general to specific)
– Project category
  o Research
  o Education
  o Management/Support
– Project description (1000)
– What are the innovative elements of your project? (e.g. methodology, outcome, field of application)? (600)
– In what way is your project an active driver of digital transformation? (600)
– What are the results you hope to achieve with your project? (400)
– What are the methods you will use to achieve these results? (400)
– What are the risks that threaten the success of the project? (400)

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[3] The available number of characters including spaces is indicated in brackets. e.g. "Abstract (300)" means that 300 characters including spaces are available for the description of the abstract.

- What is the timeline of your project? What are significant milestones? (400)
- How are you going to disseminate the results at the end of the project? (400)
- Project members and their role
- Budget
  - Staff and material costs with brief justification (400)
- Project duration in months (must be completed by the end of 2024)
- Consent to general conditions