



## 2020 - Digital Futures Fund (DFF) – Call for Projects

### 1 Objectives and Benefits

With the "Digital Futures Fund" (DFF), ZHAW digital aims to provide targeted support for applications dealing with digital transformation. The DFF is aimed at all ZHAW employees from the fields of education and research as well as from the management and support areas. The DFF is part of ZHAW digital's efforts to create encouraging conditions for all ZHAW staff and to promote cooperation and networking within the ZHAW in the field of digital transformation.

The DFF is aimed at people who wish to develop or test an innovative idea in the field of digital transformation. They must be able to plausibly demonstrate that this activity provides overarching benefits for the ZHAW and represents a perceptible step for the digital transformation.

In concrete terms, ZHAW digital supports applications through the DFF that meet the following criteria:

The application...

- ... deals with questions of digital transformation;
- ... provides overarching benefits within the ZHAW or beyond;
- ... deals with the one-off development of an innovative concept or with the proof of concept of an innovative concept;<sup>1</sup>
- ... can be implemented within a budget of maximum kCHF 20;
- ... can be implemented within the award year;
- ... benefits from the DFF because no existing or other funding is available (e.g. Innosuisse, start-up financing etc.).

### 2 Connection between the DFF and the Digital Futures Lab (DFL)

Membership in the DFL is **not a prerequisite** for application. However, successful applicants automatically become members of the DFL as important stakeholders in the ZHAW digitization ecosystem. Because:

- The DFL provides an environment from which ideas for DFF projects can develop.
- The members are part of the evaluation committee (see section 4).
- The DFL promotes the exchange and connection between people involved in DFF projects.
- The results of DFF projects are shared through the DFL's communication channels.

### 3 Time structure

Applications can be entered continuously and are evaluated at three fixed award dates per year. Proportionate funds are available for each date. Due to the annuality principle, less time is available for the implementation of projects in the case of later awards.

#### Award Date 1

- Takes place in November/December 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> Recurring activities and/or continuation of an activity in ongoing operations are not supported.

- Applications submitted by *23:59 on 6 November 2020* will be considered at award date 1. Successful applications will be communicated by January and thus have about 11 months until the end of 2021 for project implementation.
- Applications that are submitted after 6 November 2020 will flow directly into the second award date.

### **Award Date 2**

- Takes place in April/May 2021.
- Applications submitted by *23:59 on 26 March 2021* will be considered at award date 2. Successful applications will be communicated by May and thus have about 8 months until the end of 2021 for project implementation.
- Applications that are submitted after 26 March 2021 will flow directly into the third award date.

### **Award Date 3**

- Takes place in June/July 2021.
- Applications submitted by *23:59 on 25 June 2021* will be considered at award date 3. Successful applications will be communicated by August and thus have about 5 months until the end of 2021 for project implementation.
- Projects submitted after 25 June will not automatically be included in the next call but must be resubmitted at the start of the new cycle (see 9).

## **4 Evaluation Process**

The evaluation process at the three award dates is structured as follows:

### **Step 1**

The ZHAW digital Program Office evaluates applications according to formal criteria, such as the funds applied for and the time required for implementation. If the criteria are met, applications move on to step 2.

### **Step 2**

Each application is evaluated (met/not met) by three randomly assigned ZHAW digital core team members according to the following quality criteria:

- Relation to digital transformation
- Feasibility of the application/project
- Plausibility of the overall benefit

If the majority of the evaluating core team members consider the criteria to be met, applications move on to step 3.

### **Step 3**

Each member of the DFL may allocate five votes at will to those applications which, according to their own assessment, should be implemented, taking into account the expected benefits, the impact on the ZHAW and the potential for innovation. The result of the third step is a ranked list, which moves on to step 4.

### **Step 4**

The ZHAW digital core team reviews the ranked list and reserves the right to make compensatory corrections.<sup>2</sup> The core team decides up to which rank the applications will be funded, taking into account the overall budget.<sup>3</sup>

Projects that do not receive funding will not automatically be considered at the next award date but may be resubmitted.

## 5 General Conditions

In addition to the criteria in sections 1 and 3, the following general conditions apply:

- Projects that are funded at the first award date must have started by the middle of the implementation year (first hourly bookings). Funds from projects that have not started by the middle of the year will be withdrawn after consultation with the project leader and will be reallocated at award date 3.
- One person may lead a maximum of one project per funding year.<sup>4</sup> However, they may participate in any number of funded projects.
- The submission of the same project by different organizational units or persons as separate applications with the aim of increasing the maximum funding amount is not possible. If several projects on the same topic are submitted, ZHAW digital reserves the right to impose conditions on the collaboration.
- Award dates 2 and 3 may not be used to extend ongoing projects.

## 6 Application Process

- Applications must be submitted via [zhawdigital.grantplatform.com](https://zhawdigital.grantplatform.com) (does not work with Internet Explorer).
- Accounts must be opened using the ZHAW email address and real name.
- All information entered is automatically saved as soon as the first tab of the application is filled in.
- No changes can be made once the application has been submitted.

Please [contact us](#) if you have any questions about the tool, or if it is not usable for you.

## 7 Application Questions

In addition to general administrative questions, the application includes the following substantive questions:

- Title
- Keywords
- Project description (max. 800 characters including spaces)
- Project's contribution to the digital transformation of the ZHAW (max. 300 characters including spaces)
- Concrete impact and benefit that the project will create (max. 600 characters including spaces)
- Number of months for project implementation
- Project milestones and timeline (max. 600 characters including spaces)
- Other persons/organizational units involved (max. 300 characters including spaces)

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<sup>2</sup> e.g. if the ranked list has a strong bias.

<sup>3</sup> The overall budget will be spread across the three award dates, meaning that there will be guaranteed funds available for projects entered for the second and third award date.

<sup>4</sup> Also applies when projects do not overlap in time.

- Labor costs with justification (max. 150 characters including spaces)
- Material costs with justification (max. 150 characters including spaces)
- Other remarks (max. 300 characters including spaces)

## **8 Contact**

Please address any questions about Digital Futures Fund exclusively to [digital@zhaw.ch](mailto:digital@zhaw.ch). If you are a DFL member, you may also post in the corresponding Beekeeper Stream.

## **9 Future Calls**

ZHAW digital plans to launch a DFF call every year. ZHAW digital reserves the right to limit the calls thematically (e.g. as in the first [DFF Call in spring 2020](#), which was about COVID-19). Therefore, projects entered after the deadline for the third round of calls cannot automatically be considered in the next call.