



Digital Futures Fund - 2022 Call for Projects

1. Goals and benefits

ZHAW digital would like to provide targeted support for applications *from the topic area of digital transformation* under the title "Digital Futures Fund" (DFF). The DFF is part of ZHAW digital's efforts to create encouraging conditions for all ZHAW employees and to promote collaboration and networking within the ZHAW in the field of digital transformation.

The DFF is therefore aimed at *all* ZHAW employees from the areas of education and research, as well as the third space, who would like to implement an idea in the area of digital transformation. They must be able to plausibly demonstrate that the implementation of this idea is *mainly*:

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

There are two categories available with different entry and selection procedures to cover these two aspects. Applicants decide for themselves which category is more suitable for their application.

2. Categories

The previous DFF Call showed that a pure focus on "impact" did not suit all projects. Therefore, in the new call, in addition to projects with a high impact, highly innovative projects with a limited impact radius are to be funded. Thus, the DFF now comprises two categories. The following table serves as a *guide for the selection* of the category. Accordingly, projects do not have to be a perfect fit:

	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 the digital transformation	Projects deal with questions of digital transformation, but do not necessarily actively it forward.	Projects actively drive 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 be 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.	a) Testing a cutting-edge learning technology in a specific degree.

¹ However, this is not due to quality of work, lack of time or resources (see 3.1).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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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Projects have to be entered into one or the other category (see 3.2). The submission and selection procedure is organised differently according to the projects (see 6). For both categories, funds are guaranteed to be available at both award dates (see 5).

3. Criteria and framework conditions

3.1 Formal criteria

All applications must meet the following formal criteria:

- Budget of maximum kCHF 20.
- Project have to be implemented within the award year (2022).

3.2 General conditions

The following general conditions apply:

- A person may supervise a maximum of one project as leader per funding year. However, a person may be involved in any number of funded projects.²
- A maximum of one project per person may be entered as leader per award date.
- A project may not be entered into both categories at the same time.
- A DFF project must be coherent on its own. That means:
 - The results of the project must not be dependent on other (external or internal) funding, such as another DFF project or an SNF grant.
 - The second award date may not be used to extend or add to an existing project.
- Projects that are funded in the first award date must have started before the second award date (first bookings). Funds from projects that have not been started by then will be withdrawn after consultation with the applicants and reallocated at the second award date.
- In the case of projects with similar content, ZHAW digital reserves the right to impose conditions on cooperation.
- If a project is not funded at the first award date, it may be resubmitted at the second award date.

4. Connection between the DFF and the 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 (see 6).

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



- 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.

5. Time structure

Applications may be submitted on a continuous basis. They will be evaluated at two fixed award dates. The total budget for the DFF is divided between the two award dates in such a way that funds are guaranteed to be available for both categories at both times. Due to the principle of annuality, less but sufficient time is available for the implementation of the projects at the later award date.

5.1 Award Date 1

Applications submitted by *23:59 on 15 November 2021* will be considered at award date 1. Successful applications will be communicated by the end of January and thus have approx. 11 months for implementation until the end of 2022.

Applications submitted after November 15, 2021 will flow directly into the second award date.

5.2 Award Date 2

Applications submitted by *23:59 on 28 March 2022* will be considered at award date 2. Successful applications will be communicated by the end of May at the latest and thus have approx. 7 months for implementation until the end of 2022.

Submission will not be possible after 28 March 2022 (see also 9 - Future Calls).

6. Evaluation and selection procedure

6.1 Formal criteria and framework conditions

The ZHAW digital Program Office first checks whether an application meets the general conditions and formal criteria and contains all the necessary information. Applications will be rejected without the possibility of rectification if a formal criterion or general condition is not met.³

The Program Office also evaluates whether applications have a clear connection to digital transformation and rejects applications if this is not the case.

This evaluation takes place for both categories.

6.2 Category "Impact"

All applications in the "Impact" category that pass the Program Office's review will automatically move on to the next evaluation step, which is a vote in the Digital Futures Lab (analogous to the previous call).

Voting in the DFL is of central importance to ZHAW digital and manifests the principle of the desired bottom-up movement. Accordingly, ZHAW digital expects its members to actively address their responsibility to the community and to the ZHAW as a whole. The responsibility is primarily to support and promote projects that best meet the goals and criteria of the DFF, even if these projects do not come from their own environment.

The rules for voting are:

- Each member gets 5 votes, which can be distributed among 5 projects, which according to the member generates the most **impact** (see above).
- You may vote for your own project.

³ For example, all of a person's projects are rejected without consultation if a person enters multiple projects.



- You can give a maximum of one vote per project.

Based on the experience and feedback in the previous DFF Call, the following changes will be introduced:

- Prior to voting, an agreement must be signed that sets out the principles described above.
- All questions, comments and communication about the projects must happen on the voting platform so that all applicants have the same conditions.
- The names of the project leaders are visible in the voting in order to create transparency.
- After the respective voting procedures, the voting data is made available internally at the ZHAW:
 - Number of votes received per project
 - Origin of votes aggregated at institute/center/OU level

The applications are ranked according to the votes they receive. The ZHAW digital core team ultimately decides up to which rank funding will be provided.

6.3 Category "Innovation"

All applications in the "Innovation" category that pass the Program Office's review automatically move on to the next evaluation step, which consists of an evaluation by the ZHAW digital core team (with consultation of experts, if necessary). The core team, as a committee, decides which applications best match the call and the "Innovation" category (see table under 2) and should therefore be funded. This decision is made in a discursive voting process against the background of a common understanding of innovation.

7. Application

- Applications can be submitted at zhawdigital.grantplatform.com beginning October 8, 2021 (does not work with Internet Explorer).
- Accounts must be opened with the ZHAW e-mail address and the real name.
- All information entered is automatically saved once the first tab of the application is completed.
- After submitting, no changes can be made.

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

8. Contact

All questions regarding the Digital Futures Fund should be directed exclusively to digital@zhaw.ch.

9. Future calls

ZHAW digital plans to launch a DFF Call every year. ZHAW digital reserves the right to narrow down the calls thematically (as was the case, for example, with the first [DFF Call in spring 2020](#), which had COVID-19 as its theme) and/or to make other substantial changes to the DFF. Therefore, projects entered after the deadline for the second award date cannot automatically be considered in the next call.

10. Questions in the application form ⁴

10.1 Category "Impact"

- Details of applicant (name etc.)
- Language of the application

⁴ 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.



- 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 (300)
- Project duration in months (must be completed by the end of 2022)
- Consent to general conditions

10.2 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)
- 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 (300)
- Project duration in months (must be completed by the end of 2022)
- Consent to general conditions