

DIZH Innovation Program Rapid Action Call

Dealing with emergencies as a result of the war against Ukraine

With the "Rapid Action Calls" of the Innovation Program, the Digitalization Initiative of the Canton of Zurich (DIZH) supports projects that will respond to immediate social challenges through measures that can be implemented quickly.

In various respects, the war against Ukraine is seen as a turning point with repercussions on many levels of society. In a short time, a very large number of people have found themselves in an immediate emergency. With the admission of numerous refugees, the canton of Zurich is also confronted with significant challenges. This Rapid Action Call is intended to fund projects that are carried out in close cooperation with a practice partner. Thanks to the multidisciplinary use of digital means, solutions are to be generated to deal with emergencies because of the war against Ukraine. The focus is on innovations that support the situation of people in the canton of Zurich who have fled the war. Possible topics are, (a) platforms for controlling or forecasting childcare or housing services, (b) tools for overcoming the challenges of integrating students from Ukraine into the education system, (c) tools for promoting networking and the exchange of information between refugees and other stakeholders, (d) methods for optimizing relief goods logistics, (e) concepts for dealing with long-term challenges (labor market integration, etc.) in the event of a longer war, (f) concepts for supporting reconstruction and return, (g) innovative interventions to support and integrate refugees, etc.

Projects for the Rapid Action Call "Dealing with emergencies as a result of the war against Ukraine" can claim **CHF 15,000 to 75,000** in funds from the DIZH Special Credit and may last **a maximum of 12 months after the start of the project (max. 3 months** after decision). According to the general conditions for DIZH support, every proposal for a DIZH project must show at least the same amount of personal contribution from the DIZH institutions (matching funds). Applicants should, if possible, bring in and prove these matching funds. If this poses a challenge, the project plan is not fundamentally at risk, but there will be solutions within the DIZH institution. Prior communication and coordination between the involved DIZH institutions and at least one practice partner (non-academic institutions, such as organizations, companies, and institutions from education, culture, business, and civil society) are mandatory. The project aims to produce a result that, within a defined framework, has an impact that will benefit people who are in need because of the war against Ukraine. Further conditions for applications that can be submitted within the framework of this Rapid Action Call are set out below.

Conditions for the current DIZH Rapid Action Call

Application – content and structure: An application comprises **a maximum of 3 pages** and must address the following points:

- **Description of the relation to emergencies caused by the war against Ukraine:** The application must state how the project relates to the emergency caused by the war. The explicit involvement of the direct target group of the project (e.g., refugees from Ukraine) is important as well as the early and close involvement of one or more practical partners (e.g., NGOs, educational institutions, cantonal authorities). It also makes sense to include the specific knowledge and skills of people with a clear connection to Ukraine (e.g., Ukrainian employees at one of the DIZH institutions). A "Letter of Intent" from at least one practice partner is mandatory, which clearly shows that the planned project will create a concrete benefit for people or institutions affected by the war and that there are no redundancies to existing projects. In terms of content, the applicants are free, provided that the application itself includes methods or topics of digitization in a relevant way. Representatives of all disciplines that are taught and researched at DIZH institutions are addressed. Employees from the "Third Space" of the DIZH institutions with a connection to the topic are also eligible to apply.

- **Impact:** The projects funded by this Rapid Action Call should be able to be implemented quickly and, with a proven connection to digitization, should help to deal with the current emergencies because of the war against Ukraine. The impact of the project should primarily be achieved in the canton of Zurich. Accordingly, the applicants should specifically explain which question is being addressed or which problem is being solved, and what effect is to be achieved. Applicants should demonstrate how a clear impact can be achieved by the time the project is completed at the latest. Applicants should also explain the potential of the proposed solutions for future similar emergencies.
- **Budget and financing:** Funds from the DIZH Special Credit of CHF 15,000 to CHF 75,000 can be requested for the Rapid Action Call. As in other DIZH calls, the applicants should show that they have made a personal contribution of the same amount. In contrast to other calls, projects can also be submitted if applicants have problems raising the matching funds. In this case, the project plan is not fundamentally at risk, but the applicants will be supported by those responsible within the DIZH institution to find alternative solutions.¹ Further, applicants can contact the contact points of their institution and/or the DIZH Program Office at any time. The contact details can be found on the website. The DIZH funds may be used for personnel and material costs or the procurement of equipment and systems if they are below the threshold². They may also be used for the salaries of the applicants. DIZH funds may not be used for the expenses of practice partners. Assignment of individual tasks to third parties (subcontracting) using DIZH funds is possible if this is essential for the project³.

Evaluation criteria: The following criteria and associated indicators are taken from the "Regulations for the DIZH 2020-2029 Innovation Program". In the case of this rapid action call, **criteria 1, 2, and 6** are in the foreground:

1. **Impact:** The project aims to implement research and/or technology-based findings in society and the market as quickly and pragmatically as possible and is accompanied by economic, social, political, cultural, artistic, and/or ecological added value. The expected impact should be addressed in a Letter of Intent (LoI) by the practice partner (see also 6. Practice Orientation). *Key indicators: Feasibility, short time horizon, scope, relevance for social actors, differentiation from what already exists.*
2. **Reference to the current context/situation:** The project deals with issues that are particularly important in the current social context. *Key indicators: plausibility of the time-critical nature, follow-up financing.*
3. **Scientific and professional quality:** The project is based on the latest findings and meets the high standards of the disciplines involved. *Key indicators: relationship to the "state of the art", adequacy of the methodology.*
4. **Inventiveness:** The project has a forward-looking character. *Key indicators: the novelty of the application, opportunities.*
5. **Cooperation and disciplinary dialogue:** With its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary character, the project contributes to the networking of the partner institutions. *Essential*

¹ Applicants may contact the following persons directly:

PHZH: for questions regarding matching funds and financing: Christoph Schmid (c.schmid@phzh.ch), for general questions: Roberto Sala (roberto.sala@phzh.ch)

UZH: Gabriele Prohaska (gabriele.prohaska@uzh.ch)

ZHAW: Daniel Baumann (band@zhaw.ch)

ZHdK: Silvan Becchio (silvan.becchio@zhdk.ch)

² Procurement of equipment, facilities, and infrastructure that are indispensable for the project and have a useful life of at least one year.

The following thresholds apply per acquisition: UZH: 10 TCHF / PHZH, ZHAW, ZHdK: 50 TCHF. Acquisitions exceeding these thresholds are classified as "investments" and must be procured internally by the university. These cannot be financed with DIZH funds. Purchases of equipment and facilities below this threshold may be reported for DIZH credit.

Examples are laboratory equipment, machines, instruments, tools, hardware (including operating software), printers, vehicles, furniture, software, licenses, and patents.

³ A maximum of 20% of the total project costs or a maximum of 100 TCHF may be used for subcontracting.

indicators: Fit of the interdisciplinary system to the problem, synergy effects between institutions and departments.

6. **Practical orientation:** The practical orientation should be expressed in cooperation with at least one practical partner. *Essential indicators: plausibility of the strategy for generating practical impact, existence of existing (or lacking) stakeholder groups, goal-oriented involvement of practice partners, reference to a significant practical issue, letters of intent from practice partners.*

Eligible applicants: All members of the DIZH institutions who are employed are eligible to apply for this Rapid Action Call. The application can be submitted by an individual or by a team. The inclusion of applicants from more than one DIZH institution is not mandatory but is considered advantageous in the evaluation of the applications. It is also not mandatory that practice partners are actively involved after the project has been started. It is mandatory, however, to describe in a "Letter of Intent" from a practice partner, how the planned project will create a concrete benefit for people or institutions affected by the war and that there are no redundancies with existing projects. Practice partners must be financially and personally independent of the research partners⁴.

Intellectual Property (IP): With the submission of an application, it is guaranteed by the applicant that the rights of third parties have been clarified and, if applicable, that the necessary rights of use exist. The rights are regulated in a case-specific agreement with the practice partners before the start of the project. The right of the partner institutions involved in the structure to use the results free of charge for research and teaching in all areas of the application must be ensured. In case of a commitment, IP issues will be regulated according to the DIZH Innovation Program Rules 2020-2029 (§7).

Submission and duration: For the submission of proposals the template is to be used, for the calculation of the budget the table is to be used, both of which can be downloaded at <https://dizh.ch/en/innovationprogram>. Further information on submission instructions can be found at the same web address.

Submissions for this first structure call of the DIZH Innovation Program will be processed according to the following procedure:

- **12 April 2022:** submissions portal ready;
- **2 May 2022:** deadline for submissions;
- **End of May 2022:** decisions on submissions made;
- a formal start of the projects is possible **immediately after approval**.

⁴ Independence is guaranteed if the natural persons involved in the project on the part of a DIZH institution:

- do not work for a practice partner at the same time;
- have no economic interests in the business activities of a practice partner and do not financially support a practice partner for other reasons.

Legal entities working together as DIZH institution members and practice partners are considered independent if none of the parties holds 20% or more of the participation rights of the other partner.

The mission of the DIZH

Digitalization initiative of the Canton of Zurich (DIZH)

Digitalization places great demands on the economic, technological, and social innovation power of the Canton of Zurich. Society is undergoing fundamental change because of digitalization. This process offers great opportunities in all areas of society, but also requires new skills and poses new challenges for culture, business, science, and society. It is the joint task of all these players to meet the opportunities and challenges of digitalization and to generate innovations.

The Digitalisation Initiative of the Canton of Zurich (DIZH) aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the Canton of Zurich as a location for research and development. The initiative supports culture, the economy, and society in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by digitalization, and in using them to benefit Zurich as a business location.

The central foundation of the DIZH is the cooperation between Zurich's higher education institutions in the field of digitalization. The University of Zurich (UZH), the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), and the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH) are systematically networked within the DIZH to promote research, innovation, and education in the field of digitalization using interdisciplinary approaches.

DIZH Innovation Program

The Innovation Program is a central instrument of the DIZH. It aims to strengthen the competitiveness of Zurich as a business location through various research and development projects in the field of 'digitalization' between Zurich's higher education institutions and the private and public sectors. Within the framework of partnerships, research findings are to be brought closer to practical application and made available for practical use. Conversely, the program allows the needs and experiences of practice-based institutions (Practice Partners) to flow into scientific research. The Practice Partners are all non-academic institutions, such as organizations and companies from the fields of culture, business, and civil society. Characteristics of innovation that are essential for those wishing to participate in the innovation program include willingness to take risks, disciplinary diversity, value creation, and collaboration.

The DIZH Innovation Program awards grants through transparent, competitive procedures. The focus of the program is on the funding of projects that generate innovations that initiate or expand the new possibilities of digital transformation. For this purpose, different calls are launched every year. With the "Rapid Action Calls" projects will be supported that respond to immediate social challenges through measures that can be implemented quickly. The types of calls launched within the framework of the DIZH Innovation Program are explained in the document 'Innovation Program Concept'.

The 'Innovation Program Concept' and the 'Innovation program rules' are available in German at <https://dizh.ch/en/innovationprogram>.