ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 37
8092 Zurich, Switzerland

www.eth4d.ethz.ch

Call for Proposals

ETH4D Research Challenges

1. Background

The objective of **ETH for Development (ETH4D)** is to develop innovative solutions that effectively address the challenges of the global population and to educate the future leaders of sustainable development, who will work towards decreasing global poverty and inequality, as well as protecting our planet.

The goal of the **ETH4D Research Challenges** is to support project-based research between ETH Zurich researchers, practitioners (i.e. from the private sector, NGOs, governmental organisations) and partners from low- and middle-income countries to identify effective solutions to poverty reduction[1].

2. Definition of ETH4D Research Challenges

An ETH4D Research Challenge needs to be a **clearly defined research question** that has the objective of creating a **positive impact** for people living in low- and middle-income countries. It must be a research question related to (a) the research interests of an ETH Zurich research group and (b) the current or future work of a private or public organisation.

The objective of ETH4D Research Challenges must be the development, testing, evaluation or implementation of an innovative product, policy or service – involving a technology (as part of the solution

---

[1]   A limited amount of funding can be used for research in upper middle-income countries as defined in Appendix 1, if a justification is provided.

ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 37
8092 Zurich, Switzerland

www.eth4d.ethz.ch

or as part of the research) that responds to a specific development challenge. The challenges addressed must be relevant for poor people in low- and lower-middle income countries as defined in Appendix 1[2].

Examples include:

➢ remote sensing for micro-insurance products based on weather risks
➢ a mobile-phone application for subject identification in low governance settings
➢ policies to support the use of solar energy
➢ a system for recycling plastic bottles in low-income settings
➢ a mobile-phone application to improve governance of public infrastructure
➢ low energy refrigeration
➢ medical equipment that can be used without access to electricity
➢ 3D printing for the physically disabled in low-income settings
➢ a mobile-phone decision support tool for optimal agronomic practices
➢ information and education programmes for energy literacy and public health

3. Eligibility

A team of **academic and non-academic** institutions from Switzerland and **low- or lower middle-income countries** can formulate an ETH4D challenge. A limited amount of funding can be used for research in upper middle-income countries, if a justification is provided.

The team must consist of at least one ETH4D member as main applicant and at least one non-academic partner (such as industry, a NGO or a policy organisation). An ETH4D member is a professor of ETH Zurich and includes his/her group members, such as doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and senior scientists. If the main applicant is not a professor, the proposal must be accompanied by a letter of commitment by the host professor, indicating his/her financial contribution to the project. ETH Zurich research groups, which are not yet a member of ETH4D, can also apply and will become a member if they are awarded an ETH4D Research Challenge Grant (ETH4D RCG).[3] At least one partner (academic or non-

---

[2]   A limited amount of funding can be used for research in upper middle-income countries, if a justification is provided.

[3]   ETH4D membership is open to all professors at ETH. The membership fee for the period 2019-2024 is 6kCHF for ETH professors and 3kCHF for SNSF professors.

ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 37
8092 Zurich, Switzerland

www.eth4d.ethz.ch

academic) must be from a low- or lower middle-income country, as defined by the OECD DAC list in Appendix 1. A limited amount of funding can be used for research in upper middle-income countries, if a justification is provided.

4. Funding

Projects must last between **6-18 months**. This includes potential iterations of prototyping and user testing, as well as informing key stakeholders of the findings.

ETH4D RCG fund grants between 10 kCHF and 100 kCHF. The yearly budget for the entire programme is currently at 200 kCHF and is typically awarded in two separate calls for proposals. We aim to fund 3 to 6 ETH4D Research Challenge projects per year.

Funding from an **ETH4D RCG can be used** for any travel and material costs as well as for salaries of staff or consultants in low- or middle- income countries hired specifically for this project. Funding from the ETH4D RCG **cannot be used** to pay the salary of participating ETH members (professors, postdocs, doctoral students, senior scientists) or industry or policy partners **in Switzerland**. Costs for a student assistant at ETH specifically hired for the ETH4D Research Challenge can be remunerated for a maximum of 6 months.

The partners (academic and non-academic combined) must provide contributions corresponding to at least 70% of the requested ETH4D RCG in cash. Cash contributions can come from third-party funding (from industry, public organisations, NGOs etc.), professorship reserves or base funding. In-kind contribution such as salaries of ETH research groups and overheads cannot be counted as cash contribution. The only type of salary that can be counted as cash contribution are wages of student assistants at ETH Zurich hired specifically for the ETH4D Research Challenge for a maximum of 6 months.

ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 37
8092 Zurich, Switzerland

www.eth4d.ethz.ch

5. Submission Procedure and Deadlines

Proposal submissions are possible twice a year. Application deadlines are **February 28th** and **September 30th**. All application documents must be written in English and must be submitted electronically (in **one single PDF file**) to patricia.heuberger@sl.ethz.ch. They must include the following elements, **in the following order:**

- ➢ Application form (using the template in Appendix 2), containing:
    - o Cover sheet
    - o Abstract
    - o 3-4 page research narrative, including background and motivation, the research plan and expected results and strategy for their implementation
- ➢ Bibliography
- ➢ Work packages and Milestones shown in a Gant-Chart.
- ➢ Budget (using the budget template Appendix 3)
- ➢ Letter(s) of support from the non-academic partner(s), clearly stating the question of interest, its relevance to the organisation, and the time-related and financial contributions the partner is willing to make to the project.
- ➢ CVs of all involved partners (2 pages max. per partner)

Please note that ETH Zurich strives to promote gender equality in scientific research. Gender must be consistently taken into account from the proposal development to the research and dissemination phase.

- ➢ Study teams should make an effort to be gender balanced.
- ➢ Projects that involve humans as research subjects (e.g., end-users, patients or survey respondents), must consider gender roles in experimental design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the outcomes. If the gender dimension is not being considered, a short justification of why it is not being addressed must be included.

If applicable, relevant ethical, legal and social considerations should be included in the proposal. The prospective research must comply with the existing ethics regulations and adhere to the principles of research integrity valid at ETH Zurich.

Recipients of the ETH4D Challenge Grant whose research includes human subjects have to receive approval from the ETH Ethics Commission and submit the approval documents to ETH4D as soon as they

ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 37
8092 Zurich, Switzerland

www.eth4d.ethz.ch

receive approval and before starting field work (note: this only applies once projects have been selected for funding by ETH4D).

6. Evaluation and Selection

All proposals will be evaluated by an ETH4D selection committee consisting of three academic members of ETH4D, the executive director of ETH4D and a representative from industry, policy, or a NGO.

In addition to the **quality and feasibility** of the research proposal, particular attention will be given to the following selection criteria:

- ➢ **Relevance** of the project: The project has the potential to address a pressing challenge faced by poor people in low- or middle-income countries. In that sense, it tackles important - but understudied - problems that affect a large number of people in low-income countries, and develops scalable solutions. Projects should provide clear arguments for why the research project differs from and/or improves upon existing or similar efforts.
- ➢ **Applicability**: The results will be used by the partnering non-academic institution. Having a realistic long-term implementation plan and measurable goals is important. We advise applicants to be explicit about how their partner organisation (and, potentially, other organisations) will use the results of their research.
- ➢ **Team qualifications and diversity**, as well as **own financial and in-kind contributions.**

Notification of the decision will usually be given within two months of the submission deadline. Projects may start at the latest within three months after the reception of the notification letter.

7. Deliverables

- ➢ Grant recipients are required to present their progress and discuss their open questions at the ETH4D Research Challenge Seminar, which will take place once a year. During the seminar, they will also support other grantees' work in peer-to-peer learning sessions.
- ➢ Grants recipients must submit a 1-2-page scientific report no later than three months after the completion of the project. The report outlines research and other activities conducted with grant money, the results of the research and the planned next steps.
- ➢ Grant recipients shall also submit a financial report, which includes the relevant excerpts from Refine no later than three months after completing the project.

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 37
8092 Zurich, Switzerland

www.eth4d.ethz.ch

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

> ➤ In addition, recipients can choose **one** of the following deliverables, which has to be submitted/presented to the ETH4D Executive Office no later than three months after the grant period has ended:
>   o A prototype of a new product or service
>   o A short video that explains the project to a non-scientific audience
>   o An article in the ETH Zukunftsblog (or other ETH outlet)
>   o A policy brief that presents the findings to a non-scientific audience

An important aspect of ETH4D is building bridges between science and society at large. The submitted material will be made public on our website and may be used for reporting and other outreach activities.

8. Terms of collaboration between partners of granted projects

Data exchanged within the ETH4D challenge programme are generally not considered confidential information. A non-disclosure agreement should be signed before exchanging confidential data. An agreement between ETH Zurich (for the involved ETH4D member) and the non-academic partner(s) must be signed. Such an agreement will define the rights and obligations of the partners. It may allow the partners to use the results of the project for commercial and non-commercial purposes and will specify the relevant conditions.

If personally identifying information is used, exchanged, or collected in the framework of the ETH4D Research Challenges project programme, the involved partners shall comply with applicable data protection laws and regulations, and shall establish a data management plan, including a data protection concept and appropriate data protection agreements in writing.

The projects must comply with the KFPE principles[4].

All collaborations must follow the Code of conduct for scientific cooperation of ETH Zurich (RSETHZ 416) and the Guidelines concerning Contracts in the Field of Research at ETH Zurich (RSETHZ 440.31).

---

[4]   https://naturalsciences.ch/organisations/kfpe/11_principles_7_questions

ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 37
8092 Zurich, Switzerland

www.eth4d.ethz.ch

9. Financial Administration

Due to financial and controlling procedures, ETH4D is only able to transfer the full grant sum to the grant recipient after the completion of the research project and after all the deliverables specified under Chapter 7 have been delivered.

ETH4D will reserve the full allocated grant sum for the duration of the project in a specific PSP element under the ETH4D Responsibility Center (Verantwortungsbereich). The grant recipient needs also to open a separate PSP element under her/his own Responsibility Center (Verantwortungsbereich) for the expenses of the ETH4D Research Challenges project. Once the ETH4D Research Challenges project is concluded and all reports accepted, the grant recipients will be reimbursed for all expenses up to the full granted amount awarded.