ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH4D

ETH for Development (ETH4D)

ETH Zurich
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Call for Proposals Fall 2023

ETH4D Research Challenges and ETH4D Seed Grants

1. Background

The objective of **ETH for Development (ETH4D)** is to develop innovative solutions and technologies that effectively address the challenges of the global population and to educate the future leaders of sustainable development. Eligible are projects, in collaboration with partners from low- and lower-middle-income countries according to the DAC-list of the OECD 2022-2023[1]. To that end ETH4D offers the following two research grants:

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

- **ETH4D Seed Grants** provide a smaller amount of funding to explore new collaborations, pilot a new applied research project or scale up existing research projects with partners from low- and lower-middle-income countries[1/2].

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[1] https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf

Grant	Project Definition	Applicant	Grant Sum	Duration	Matching Funds	Deadlines
ETH4D Research Challenges	Applied research by a consortium, including a non-academic partner and a partner from a low- and lower middle-income country	ETH Professor or ETH researcher (senior scientist, postdoc or doctoral candidate, all with the support of an ETH Professor)	20 – 200 kCHF	Up to 18 months	At least 70% of cash contribution	31 March 30 Sept
ETH4D Seed Grants	Explorative research by a consortium, including a non-academic partner and a partner from a low- and lower middle-income country	ETH researcher (senior scientist, postdoc or doctoral candidate all with the support of an ETH Professor)	Up to 20 kCHF	Up to 18 months	✗	31 March 30 Sept

Applications for both types of grants are open to a consortium that consists of ETH Zurich researchers, practitioners (i.e. from the private sector, NGOs, governmental organisations) and partners from low- and lower-middle-income countries.

2. Definition of projects

2a. Definition of ETH4D Research Challenges

An ETH4D Research Challenge needs to be a **clearly defined research question** that has the objective of creating **positive impact** for people living in low- and lower-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. Only solid research proposals with high scientific quality will be funded.

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

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

2b. Definition of ETH4D Seed Grants

ETH4D Seed Grants can be used for:

> ➢ Feasibility and pilot studies that might lead to a proposal for a larger research collaboration
> ➢ Scaling-up existing research projects with potentially high impact

3. Eligibility

For both grants, at least one partner (academic or non-academic) must be from a **low- or lower middle-income country**, as defined by the DAC-list of the OECD 2022-2023 in Appendix[2] 1. If well justified, projects in upper middle-income countries can be funded in exceptional cases.

3a. ETH4D Research Challenges Grants

> ➢ The team must consist of at least one **ETH4D member (professor, senior scientist, postdoc or doctoral candidate)** as main applicant and at least one non-academic partner (such as industry, an NGO, or a policy organisation). If the main applicant is a senior scientist, a postdoc or doctoral candidate, the proposal must be accompanied by a letter of support by the professor.
> ➢ ETH Zurich research groups, which are not yet a member of ETH4D, can also apply for the Research Challenge Grant and will become a member if they receive the funding[3].

3b. ETH4D Seed Grants

> ➢ The team must consist of an **ETH senior scientist, postdoc or doctoral candidate** as main applicant and at least **one non-academic partner** (such as industry, an NGO, or a policy organisation). This grant is not open for professors. The proposal must be accompanied by a letter of support by the applicant's professor.

3. Duration

Projects for both grants can last up to **18 months**. In the case of ETH4D Research Challenges, this includes potential iterations of prototyping and user testing, as well as informing key stakeholders of the findings.

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[2] https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf

[3] ETH4D membership is open to all professorships at ETH Zurich. The membership fee for the period 2022-2024 is 3kCHF for ETH professors and 1.5kCHF for SNSF/ERC professors.

4. Funding and Budget

Funding for **both grants can be used** for any travel and material costs as well as for salaries of staff or consultants in the partner country hired specifically for this project as well as salaries of postdocs or doctoral candidates, research assistants.

4a. ETH4D Research Challenges Grants

The ETH4D Research Challenges grant sum ranges between **20 kCHF and 200 kCHF**.

The yearly budget for the entire programme is currently at 200 kCHF and is typically awarded in two separate calls for proposals.

The partners (academic and non-academic combined) must provide matching funds 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. Cash contributions can be travel and material costs as well as salaries of:
- postdocs or doctoral candidates and research assistants;
- staff or consultants in the partner country hired specifically for this project;
- staff of industry or policy partners in Switzerland.

Salaries of ETH professors and overheads cannot be counted as cash contribution.

4b. ETH4D Seed Grants

The maximum grant sum of an ETH4D Seed Grants is **20 kCHF.**
No matching funds by the professorship or partners are required.

5. Submission Procedure and Deadlines for both grants

The Call for applications for both grants is launched twice a year. Application deadlines are 31 March and 30 September 2023.

All application documents must be written in English and must be submitted electronically through the online application form on the Call webpage (see here). The application must include the following elements**:**

- ➢ Completed electronic application form
- ➢ Application, to be uploaded as one pdf document, including all annexes in the following order:
  (Application template see Appendix 2)
- ➢ Bibliography, in the annex
- ➢ Work packages and Milestones shown in a Gantt Chart, in the annex.
- ➢ Letter(s) of support from the non-academic partner(s), clearly stating the interest in the project and the partnership, its relevance to the organisation, and the time-related and financial contributions the partner is willing to make to the project, in the annex.
- ➢ CVs of all involved partners (2 pages max. per partner), in the annex.
- ➢ Budget (using the budget template Appendix 3) as a separate file.

ETH Zurich strives to promote diversity and inclusion in scientific research. Factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disabilities, must be consistently considered from the start of the proposal development to the research and dissemination phase.

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 or ETH4D Seed Grants whose research includes human subjects must receive approval from the ETH Ethics Commission and submit the ethical clearance to ETH4D as soon as they receive approval and before starting field work.

In case the submitted proposal is part of a bigger research project (for instance a doctoral project), the applicant must explain the history of proposed Research Challenges project and the links to bigger ongoing project.

6. Evaluation and Selection for both grants

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 an NGO. The following evaluation criteria will be considered when taking the final selection:

➢ **Quality and feasibility** of the research proposal: The proposal needs to include specific information on the scientific methodology and field study (if applicable).

➢ **Relevance** of the project: The project has the potential to address a pressing challenge faced by people in low- and lower-middle-income countries. In that sense, it tackles important - but understudied - problems that affect many 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** (including gender, race, ethnicity, disabilities)

➢ **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

7a. ETH4D Research Challenges Grants

The following deliverables are required for the **ETH4D Research Challenge Grant.**

➢ 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 2-4-page scientific report no later than three months after the completion of the project. The report outlines research and other activities conducted with the grant, the results of the research project 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.

➢ 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.

7b. ETH4D Seed Grants

➢ Grant 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 the grant, the results of the project 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.

➢ Grant recipients are encouraged to write an article in the ETH Zukunftsblog (or other ETH outlet)

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 research, 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).

9. Financial Administration for both grants

The financial structure for the ETH4D Research Challenges or Seed Grant will be implemented by the finance desk upon reception of the notification letter.

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

One psp-element will be opened for the ETH4D Research Challenges or Seed Grant within the Responsibility Center (Verantwortungsbereich) of the professorship. Expenditures of the running project can be booked on this grant from the beginning of the project (according to the approved budget).

A second psp-element will be opened by the finance desk for the committed matching funds. The matching funds will be transferred from the research reserves of the professorship on this psp-element.

In case the project partners provide the matching funds, individual solutions need to be found with the ETH4D Grants Office.