Seed Grants for Participatory Citizen Science Projects
Call for Applications 2024

Citizen Science Zurich is awarding Seed Grants for the development and/or implementation of participatory citizen science projects. To apply for funding for your project or idea, you can submit your application by the deadline on March 3, 2024. This document outlines the criteria for Seed Grant allocation, the application process, and serves as a guide for submitting your proposal.

Objectives of Seed Grants

Citizen Science Zurich aims to promote the participation of citizens in science and research. It is important to us that academic researchers and citizens engage in collaborative, joint research projects on an equal and eye-level basis. With the Seed Grants we provide incentives for such participatory research, enabling teams of academic researchers from the University of Zurich (UZH) and/or the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) and citizens to develop and/or carry out participatory pilot projects together. We prioritize projects that, in addition to promising excellent research, demonstrate societal relevance and strive for a substantial degree of participation throughout as many phases as practicable in the research process. Seed Grants may also be awarded for projects on participatory research, subject to the same criteria outlined below.
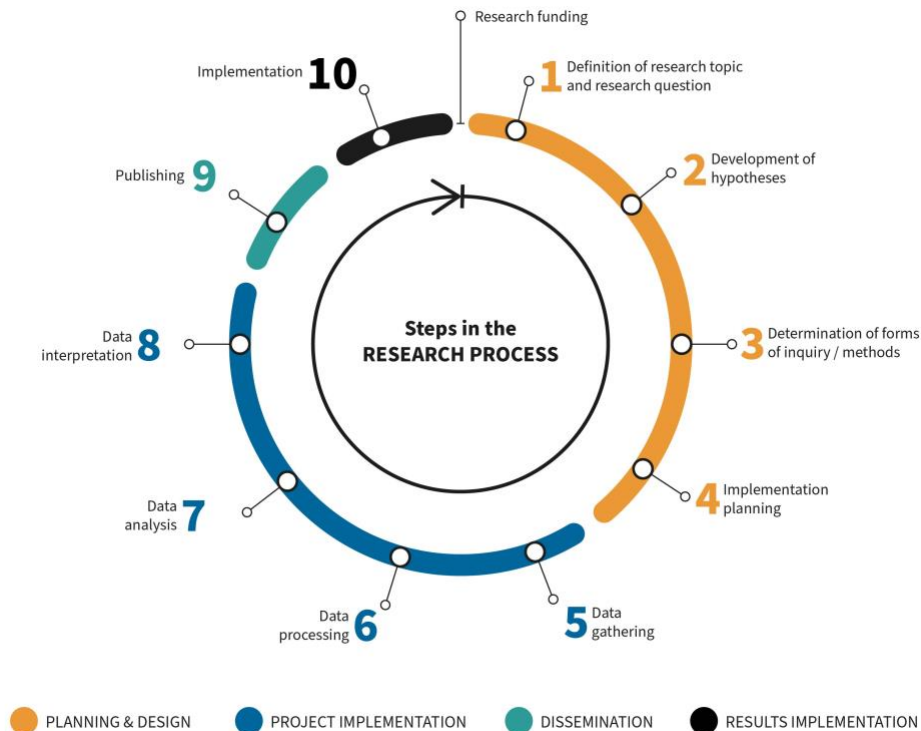

Image: Steps in the Research Process

We assume that research projects can be broadly divided into the steps depicted in the graphic above (see illustration). In participatory research projects, every step of the research process can be open to citizen participation, with the degree of participation varying in each step. Participation, for us, means initially providing the opportunity for collaboration and involvement. In a second step, the nature and manner of collaboration can be jointly developed and defined by the participants. Individual and collective skills, as well as individual and collective knowledge, should be optimally utilized at different points in the research process.

Eligibility

Teams of at least two individuals are eligible to apply: an academic researcher affiliated with UZH or ETH and a citizen. In the context of Seed Grant allocation, "academic researcher" refers to professors, postdocs, and doctoral candidates at UZH and ETH, while "citizen" refers to individuals not institutionally bound to any of the scientific disciplines involved in the project.

Project Duration and Funding Amount

You can submit a request for **up to CHF 40,000**. The funds must be used within 12 months of the start of the funding period. The use of funds must be detailed in a separate budget and financing plan attached to the application.

Language and Scope

Applications can be submitted in English or German. The application should not exceed 35,000 characters (including spaces, approximately 10 pages).

Criteria for Seed Grant Allocation

During the evaluation of applications, we will consider the following nine criteria:

Excellence and innovation in research	Clear research question addressing a gap in the current research landscape. Scientific innovation through citizen involvement.
Quality and appropriateness of methods	Methods chosen to address the research question are scientifically recognized and suitable for the participatory design of the project.
Degree and structure of participation	In which phases of the research process does the collaboration between researchers and citizens take place, and how? How can individuals who are not part of the project team also participate in the project? A high degree of active participation in the project is preferred.

Added value of the participatory approach	What benefits do the participants in the project gain from their involvement?
Societal need	Is there a societal need for the insights of the project? How significant is it, and who does it affect?
Intended impact of the project	What results and/or changes are sought through the project?
Feasibility	The project is feasible, and implementation is realistic.
Sustainability	The project produces insights that can be used in the long term and are sustainably applied/practiced. There may be prospects for follow-up projects (e.g., submitting a proposal to SNF or the EU).
Open Science	The project makes generated data and derived insights publicly accessible.

Timeline for the 2024 Call

You can submit your application until **March 3, 2024, 23:59**, through our online application tool.

The managing office reserves the right to seek evaluations of your application thereafter. The allocation of Seed Grants will be decided by a committee comprising academic researchers, citizen scientists, citizens, and a representative from the Mercator Switzerland Foundation. We aim to communicate funding decisions by the end of May 2024.

Project Support

In addition to financial support, Citizen Science Zurich provides assistance in the form of consulting and moderation services. If your project involves collecting or analyzing digital data, we recommend exploring the two free tools offered by Citizen Science Zurich beforehand. You can find the tools here: https://lab.citizenscience.ch/en. The "CS Logger" allows you to create an app in simple steps, enabling activities such as taking photos, uploading videos, or conducting surveys. The "CS Project Builder" allows the creation and publication of projects involving citizens in the analysis of (digital) data.

Application Process

Since 2022, we have been using a digital application tool. We still ask you to use the form available on Seed Grants | Citizen Science Zurich | UZH for your application and upload it to the application tool. To complete the application, you will need the following documents and information:
- Application form (PDF)
- Budget and financing plan (PDF)
- CV of the applicant/contact person (PDF)

Please note that your application in the application tool cannot be saved or submitted a second time. Therefore, please have the aforementioned documents and information ready for your application. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the managing office.

You can access the Seed Grants 2024 call on the application tool here

Contact
For any inquiries, please contact the Citizen Science Zurich managing office. Your contact person is Olivia Höhener.

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