

ETH-Domain ORD Program

Measure 1: field-specific actions

Track A: Explore projects

Application guidelines (2nd call)

Introduction

The overall aim of this first measure of the ETH-Domain's Open Research Data (ORD) Program is to support researchers engaging in or developing **ORD practices** (<https://ethrat.ch/de/eth-bereich/open-research-data/>) with and for their community(-ies) and to assist these researchers in becoming Open Science leaders in their field(s).

It is the declared goal to fund proposals that make tools (e.g., software; hardware; protocols; standards; benchmarks; documentation and training materials; networking and education events, activities and resources) available which enable, facilitate and foster sharing research data based on ORD principles. Preference will be given to projects which engage and are connected to a community. Therefore, applicants are strongly invited to demonstrate why their project represents an ORD practice that encourages good research in their field.

Track A mission

Funding for "Explore projects" aims at **exploring/prototyping/building up ORD practices**, which could foster and improve research capabilities and support research communities.

These projects should pave the way, inside, across and outside the ETH-Domain, for sustainable ORD future practices and have the potential to be extensively adopted in many research and societal communities.

General terms and conditions

Applicants and Consortiums

Proposals can be submitted by one applicant¹ or by a consortium of multiple applicants.

Applicants must be employed by an ETH Domain institution (ETHZ, EPFL, PSI, Empa, EAWAG, WSL) for the duration of the project. Please also verify your institution's guidelines, as they may define additional eligibility requirements.

There are no restrictions on consortiums. They can be composed by applicants from one or multiple institutions, with no restrictions on the number of applicants from the same institution. A consortium must designate a "corresponding applicant" to represent all other co-applicants.

There are no restrictions on applicants who were awarded a project under the previous 1st call of Explore and/or other Measure 1 tracks (e.g., Contribute); it is thus possible to submit applications for follow up projects.

Budget and Duration

The duration of projects can be up to 18 months. All applicants must start working on the project within 6 months of its approval.

The overall budget must not exceed CHF 150'000. This is the total cost of the project (including in-kind contributions), **not** the amount of funding the applicants will receive.

Funding

Proposals receive 50% co-funding from the ETH Board (matching funds principle). The remaining budget must be provided by in-cash or in-kind resources from within the institution of the applicants.

Applicants affiliated with Research Institutes (Ris) must provide a letter of support from their institution (see the "Required documents" section below). This does not apply to EPFL and ETHZ affiliated applicants. Please verify your institution's guidelines for details.

Budgeting Guidelines and Eligible Costs

Budgets must include all project costs, including those expected to be covered in-kind or in-cash.

In case of a consortium spanning multiple institutions, the budget must detail which part is allocated in which institution. Transfer of allocated funds between institutions after the proposal is approved is generally not possible.

Only costs specific to exploring an ORD practice can be included in the budget. Adjacent research costs should not be included, including data production/collection and analysis, research software/hardware development, etc. Operational costs of ORD platforms² can only be included when they are newly developed as part of the project and only for the duration of the project. Costs that are already funded by a third party are not eligible for funding and do not qualify as in-kind or in-cash contributions.

Please also verify your institution's guidelines for detailed guidance regarding budgeting requirements, funding and regulations for in-kind or in-cash contributions.

¹ The term "principal investigator" (PI) is avoided since the scheme is not intended to support research (investigation).

² Because of the expected diversity of proposals, a "platform" is understood in a broad sense: any ORD software, database, collection, open lab, infrastructure etc. that serves an existing or intended ORD community.

Institution guidelines

Links to institutions' specific guidelines:

Institution	Link to document
ETHZ	https://ethrat.ch/en/information-for-ethz-and-epfl-applicants
EPFL	https://ethrat.ch/en/information-for-ethz-and-epfl-applicants
PSI	https://intranet.psi.ch/en/ord
Empa	https://www.empa.ch/group/empa/intranet
WSL	https://intra.wsl.ch/de/direktion/calls-der-direktion/open-research-data-practices
EAWAG	https://www.internal.eawag.ch/de/rechtsgrundlagen/weisungen-interne-regelungen/weisungen/2022/23-07/

How to apply

All the required documents (see table below) must be written in English and must be submitted via the online submission platform **before the submission deadline of 29 February 2024 (17:00 CET)**, concerning the second and final call.

Required documents

Research proposal	This template must be used. It can be downloaded from the online submission platform.
Confirmation by the ETH-Domain institution(s) concerning the co-funding	<i>For Research Institutes (RIs) only.</i> Please follow the institutional guidelines. It should be officially signed by the institution's representative for the ORD program.
Letter(s) of support by the Lab/Group/Research Unit's director (if applicable)	See the "Institution guidelines" section above ³
CV (including major scientific achievements)	All applicants must submit their CV and Major Scientific Achievements according to the SNSF guidelines . No other format will be accepted.
Ethical issues questionnaire	The corresponding applicant will be required to fill out an ethical issues questionnaire via the applicant portal.

Applications will only be considered if they strictly meet the guidelines, notably with respect to length and format.

³ The letter(s) regarding the co-funding and the letter(s) of support can be combined if need be.

Evaluation procedure and criteria

Each application will be evaluated and scored by external reviewers based on the following criteria.

Excellence of ORD Practice – Weight = 0.3

- To what extent will the planned project substantially advance the ORD practice in the respective community, solve or take a crucial step towards solving a critical outstanding problem (thus facilitating progress) in the targeted field(s)?
- To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state-of-the-art (e.g., based upon novel concepts/approaches)?
- How well are already existing ORD best practices (e.g., FAIR ones) considered?
- How well does or could the project integrate with existing (ETH-Domain) ORD services and infrastructures or how well could it contribute to build up missing ones?
- What is the applicants' track record on advancing research themes (not limited to ORD ones) in the targeted field(s) and on respective project management?
- To what extent does the proposal support a collaborative approach, involving significant synergies, complementarities, or/and scientific added-value to achieve its objectives?

Impact on Community – Weight 0.4

- To what extent may an existing or a newly formed community (be able to) engage with the ORD practice(s) built-up during the project?
- What will be the field(s)-specific extent of the community(-ies) to be reached by the built-up ORD practice(s)?
- How and how much will the built-up ORD practice(s) contribute to the respectively targeted research goals and visions within the reached community(-ies)?

Implementation – Weight = 0.3

- To what extent is the outlined project feasible, bearing in mind that designing/building up ORD practices in specific research fields is a high risk/high gain endeavor?
- Is any associated risk appropriately addressed?
- To what extent are the proposed measures and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
- To what extent are the proposed time-plan and resources necessary and properly justified?

- To what extent is the project collaborative, going beyond what an individual Lab/Group/Research Unit of a single ETH-Domain institution could achieve alone?
- How sustainable is the proposed project inside the ETH-Domain? For example, do the applicants lay out how they may cooperate with existing ORD service and infrastructure providers, to ensure the long-term success of the ORD practice(s), if then adopted?

Conflicts of interests on the side of the evaluation committee will be handled according to the guidance available via the programme's website: <https://ethrat.ch/en/measure-1-calls-for-field-specific-actions/>.

Decision and project start

The final decision about each proposal will be announced around four months after the submission deadline. Grantees will have to start their project as early as possible but at the latest within **six months** after the decision is communicated.

Funding will be transferred to the corresponding applicant's institution in two installments. The first installment will be paid at the start of the project, once the corresponding applicant has complied with all administrative and ethical requirements. The second installment will be paid upon approval of the final scientific and financial reports (see below).

Reporting

The corresponding applicant will have to comply with the following reporting duties:

1. **Intermediate scientific and financial reports**, within **one** month **after** the **first half** of the project's duration (except for projects lasting 12 months only);
2. a **final scientific report**, within **one** month **after** the project's **end**;
3. a **final financial report**, also within **one** month **after** the project's **end**.

The corresponding applicant will have to explain in the scientific reports the key results achieved by the project, any changes or deviations from the initial project plan and their reasons, the main outreach of the explored and/or built up ORD practice.

The financial report will have to summarize the information included in an accompanying detailed report issued by the Financial Services of the applicant(s) and provide a summary of all spending made during the project duration, including in relation to the contribution of the ETH Board and the institutions' co-funding. The corresponding applicant will be provided by the EPFL's Research Office with templates for the reports.

Open science

Grantees should ensure open access to scientific publications (self-archiving or open access publishing) and to all the project's deliveries.

Ethical and legal compliance

Applicants bear the main responsibility for the planned research project. In particular, they take into account all ethical, legal and societal aspects of the proposed research, and, if granted, they shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations in relations with these matters.