

2nd Call for Proposals for Platform Projects in the context of the LOOP BioMedical Informatics Platform (LOOP BMIP)



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1. The LOOP Zurich – overview

The LOOP Zurich is a translational research center focusing on precision medicine. It builds on the complementary expertise of the ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich, and the four university hospitals in Zurich – University Hospital Zurich, Balgrist University Hospital, University Children’s Hospital Zurich, University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich – in basic biomedical research, bioinformatics, biomedical engineering, and clinical research. The goal is to improve the fundamental understanding of diseases in order to develop tailored treatment strategies and therapies.

The LOOP Zurich pursues a data-driven medicine approach. The LOOP Zurich Biomedical Informatics Platform (LOOP BMIP) combining the tremendous amount of clinical information collected in clinical data warehouses of Zurich’s four university hospitals will be accessible to the researcher of The LOOP Zurich partner institutions as of Q3/2026. It will enable researchers to achieve novel insights into etiology and progression of diseases, fostering the development of highly specific diagnostic and therapeutic approaches for the benefit of patients.

Rendering The LOOP BMIP into a state-of-the-art informatics platform for research purposes requires enhancement of the platform with regard to the incorporation of

- i. novel and supplemental data types, and/or
- ii. advanced tools for data analysis based e.g. on artificial intelligence

The purpose of Platform Projects is to support such activities.

2. LOOP platform projects at a glance



3. Summary of the 2nd call for proposals for Platform Projects supporting the LOOP Zurich BioMedical Informatics Platform (LOOP BMIP)

The LOOP Zurich Platform Projects grant for the LOOP BMIP supports groups of typically 2 to 4 researchers and their teams from The LOOP Zurich partner institutions (only one group from a single institution would also be eligible for this call). Applicants should cover complementary skills, knowledge, and resources to address a project supporting the further development of the LOOP BMIP to the benefit of the Zurich research community. The overall funding for The LOOP Zurich Platform Projects is a maximum of CHF 500'000 per project, to be spent over a period of 2 to 3 years.

The projects are intended to

- i) advance and support the development and implementation of a sustainable infrastructure that enables the incorporation of novel and supplemental types of health-related data such as -omics data, imaging data, and/or quasi-real time data (high-frequency recordings) into The LOOP BMIP and/or
- ii) develop new analysis techniques capable of dealing with large amounts of relevant medical data of different types. These techniques should lead to novel insights into a medical problem and/or predict possible outcomes and/or treatment responses with the potential to guide and improve clinical decision making.

The projects must be designed in such a way that success crucially depends on the synergistic contributions of all investigators and their teams.

Timelines (2nd Call for The LOOP Zurich Platform Projects):

- Call-start: **August 17, 2026**
- Submission deadline for project proposal: **October 13, 2026**
- Communication of decision to applicants: **December 8, 2026**
- Earliest project start: **February 1, 2027**

4. Principles and requirements for The LOOP Zurich Platform Projects

The Call for The LOOP Zurich Platform Projects proposals is **open to applications from all disciplines of data-driven health- and biomedical research**. Applications must fulfill the following requirements:

- The overarching aim of Platform Projects is to **render data from different sources interoperable and reusable** for high-end data-driven research. Data might include structured and unstructured medical data from clinical routine and clinical research and other sources (e.g., medical imaging, molecular profiling). Data **must** follow the FAIR-standards (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) according to the Swiss Personalized Health Network (SPHN).
- Platform Projects should have **research & developing character** involving partners from basic biomedical and clinical science, data science and/or engineering, thereby enabling data-driven, stratified, or personalized health research on a given broad topic or focused on specific data types suited for this purpose.
- **Sharing data, used or generated during the project is mandatory**. All data must be incorporated into the LOOP BMIP thus serving the Zurich research and healthcare community in the long term. (a mandatory prerequisite).
- An efficient **project/data management concept** will be considered of high importance by the evaluation board.

The 2nd call for The LOOP Zurich Platform Projects focuses on solutions that extend the usability of the LOOP BMIP.

- **Scientific competences:**

The call addresses primarily the Zurich biomedical informatics community. Collaboration with external partners is possible provided skills not accessible within the Zurich research community are required.

- **Eligibility**

Principal investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs are employed by one of the following partner institutions: ETH Zurich, University of Zurich, University Hospital Zurich, Balgrist University Hospital, University Children's Hospital Zurich, and the University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich.

PIs and Co-PIs must have guaranteed employment for the duration of the grant period and guaranteed access to the home institution's infrastructure as well as data and services necessary to conduct the approved research.

Collaborations with outside groups:

If a specific expertise required for the project is missing in the Zurich biomedical research area, collaborations with national and/or international partner labs are possible. It is, however, required that the principal activity happens in Zurich; resources allocated to external collaborations should not exceed 20% of total funds.

- **Gender Equality**

The LOOP Zurich is in line with the efforts of its partner institutions in the field of gender equality and diversity. Prospective The LOOP Zurich Platform Projects should apply and implement the corresponding gender equality action plans of their home institutions.

5. Time, financial scope, and project management

- The total duration of a LOOP Zurich Platform Project is 2 to 3 years, with a total maximum funding of CHF 500'000.
- Direct project costs, which include personnel salaries (PhD students, postdocs, technical personnel), consumables and travel will be provided by the grant scheme. Costs for salaries of PIs and Co-PIs will NOT be provided. Major equipment and/or infrastructure may be covered but requires approval by The LOOP Zurich's directorate for any item exceeding CHF 20'000. Fees for services and the use of infrastructure necessary for data/sample collection/management and analyses can be charged.
- Project funding will start on February 1, 2027 (earliest). Project start may be delayed by up to a maximum of 6 months upon approval by The LOOP Zurich directorate (i.e., until August 1, 2027 at the latest).
- Progress of the LOOP Platform Projects will be regularly monitored. This includes the submission of annual intermediate reports (scientific and financial reports at months 12 and 24). At the end of the project a final report (scientific and financial) must be delivered.
- The necessary ethical and legal approvals by the responsible commissions are a prerequisite for the final allocation of funding. The LOOP Zurich adheres to the respective regulations of the partner institutions (e.g., Institutional governance processes and data strategies).
- The LOOP BMIP is committed to adhere to SPHN standards. Accordingly, the Platform Projects must adhere to SPHN standards as well.

6. Criteria for the evaluation of grant proposals

The LOOP Zurich Platform Project proposals will be prioritized following these criteria, which must be fulfilled:

- a) **Alignment with the LOOP BMIP:** Projects must ensure full compatibility with accepted data standards for the LOOP BMIP.

- b) **Added value to The LOOP Zurich BMIP:** The proposal addresses a problem that enhances the value of the LOOP BMIP and which is of general interest for Zurich's biomedical research community.
- c) **Scientific/technical quality**
- d) **Medical relevance**
- e) **Innovation and international competitiveness**
- f) **Project organization/data management plan**
- g) **Feasibility:** The project is feasible within the maximum 3-year period of the project duration.
- h) **Sustainability:** The outcome of the projects should have a long-lasting impact on the LOOP BMIP (scope, usability).
- i) **Contributions by PIs:** Proposals document (in-kind) contributions by the individual PIs and their teams.

7. Instructions for applications

The proposals may comprise **a maximum of 12 pages** (excl. title page, references, and appendices), are written in English and structured as follows:

I. General Information

Project title, principal applicant(s) with affiliation(s), co-applicant(s) with affiliation(s), project duration (24–36 months), anticipated start date, amount requested (title page)

II. Description of work

- i) Executive summary (max. 1 page)
- ii) Background information (max. 1 page)
- iii) Previous work of applicant team in the field (max. 2 pages)
- iv) Detailed research/development plan listing the main objectives, the organization of project in individual subprojects with detailed description of individual work packages (WPs). This includes the formulation of WP specific objectives, deliverables, and milestones, as well as the description of the tasks/responsibilities of the personnel hired for the project. The proposal should also include mitigation measures to cope with potential issues. (max. 5 pages)
- v) Significance of the project: Expected added value to the LOOP BMIP and to the Zurich biomedical research community. (0.5 page)
- vi) Alignment with the LOOP BMIP infrastructure (0.5 page)
- vii) Organization: Organizational chart, tasks and responsibilities of individual applicants, gender aspects, interaction with implementation team of the LOOP BMIP (1 page)
- viii) International competition/partnership (max. 1 page)
- ix) References
- x) List of potential reviewers (5)

Appendices:

A.1 Appendix 1: Detailed budget including budget positions for IT-services and personnel (e.g., data management, study conduct, sample, and data collection/acquisition).

The budget should include in-kind contributions by PI and Co-PIs and their teams (according to the template)

A.2 Biosketches and publication lists of the persons involved (PIs, sub-project leaders, potential outside collaborators) (2 pages per person, 1 page biosketch + 1 page with 5 most important publications of the last 10 years related to project and a URL to a complete publication list (ORCID, Scholar, Scopus, etc.))

A.3 Support letter(s) by external collaborators: If external collaborations are essential for the project, the application must include a letter by the external project partner stating her/his commitment for the project.

A.4 Data Management Plan

➡ **Submission deadline of proposal. October 13, 2026**

Decision: The decision on full proposals will be communicated to applicants after
December 8, 2026

8. Evaluation and decision bodies

- **Proposals** – (aspects considered: see Section 5):
International evaluation panel (min. 3 SAB members) & topic specific external reviewers
- **Final funding decision** by The LOOP Zurich's Steering Committee

9. Contact for questions and submissions

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