



GRC Sustainability Guidelines

25 April 2024

UZH strives to provide a sustainable environment for research and teaching. In this respect, this leaflet summarizes key considerations that are particularly relevant for the support of early career researchers. The complexity of sustainable research practice encompasses several interrelated aspects:

- Ecology
- Social responsibility
- Planning a sustainable academic career

Ecological sustainability

The ecological balance of the project proposal and the measures taken by the applicants to bring this balance into as meaningful a framework as possible with their own research and career planning are important criteria for assessing the quality of project submissions.

Event planning

Sustainable catering solutions are mandatory. Please inform yourself about the options offered by the ZFV service at the University of Zurich or other local alternatives. Solutions include the seasonal and local selection of products and production processes, particularly the packaging and tableware used. For a more detailed list of aspects to consider when planning events, please refer to our Budget Planning Guidelines on our website.

Printed matter and give-aways

In principle, we ask you to refrain from using unnecessary printed matter and give-aways. If exceptions are unavoidable and practically justified, please consider reusable solutions.

Transport and travel

Flights will only be funded in well-justified cases. For all trips less than 10 hours of travel, travel by train is mandatory. If transatlantic travel is essential for an activity, it must be well justified in the application. The deciding factor for a positive funding decision is whether an activity, by itself or in conjunction with other activities, offsets the increased resource use by maximizing academic benefits. Carbon offsetting cannot be used to internally enhance an activity's sustainability record. For a more detailed list of aspects to consider when planning an event, please refer to our website's Travel Planning Guidelines.



Digital alternatives

There are now easily accessible and well-functioning digital alternatives available for meetings and exchanges of all kinds. In this regard, please check the possibilities of supporting your activities using online formats.

If you need data, archival materials, or research literature for your project, please use digital versions that are accessible online whenever possible and available. If this is not the case, we expect you to consider how your activity can contribute to making the relevant material digitally accessible to other researchers in the future. Please refer to the UZH [Open Science Policy](#) for further information.

Factsheets of the Sustainability Team

We would also like to refer you to the [factsheets](#) of the Sustainability Team.

Aspects of social sustainability

In order to provide an inclusive and supportive work environment, UZH considers relevant experiences of societal exclusion and discrimination that may shape the academic and non-academic everyday life of early career researchers. Relevant experiences may include racialization through socially ascribed stereotyping; the interaction of individual physical or mental impairments and disability through societal frameworks; gender as a socially ascribed gender characteristic and role based on biological sex; socioeconomic status (education, income, wealth) of early career researchers or their social conditions.

Reflection on the extent to which one's research activity contributes to the reproduction of discrimination and exploitation and the measures taken by applicants to avoid this reproduction constitute another dimension of quality assessment in GRC award decisions. We would like to draw your attention specifically to the following aspects:

Ethical standards in dealing with persons and research objects

Researchers at UZH are generally bound by the applicable [ethical principles of UZH](#). Please ensure that you have familiarized yourself with the ethical issues affecting your research and make the conclusions you have drawn visible in the application.

Authorship of content and data

In addition to how data and research content are obtained, how they are managed and utilized is also an important issue of responsible research. Please note the requirements and recommendations of the [Open Science Policy](#) as well as that taking data and content from the particular social and natural context you are researching is not self-explanatory. Again, it is beneficial to your application if you are argumentative about these issues.

Socially sustainable cooperation and synergies

In case your project involves field research or otherwise has references to civil society, please provide information on the impact of your research activity on the relevant social and natural contexts. In addition, explore the possibilities of sustainable local collaborations and synergies in your research



context. The relevant references can be diverse and include, among others, local academic or other public institutions, NGOs, as well as members of population groups related to your own research topic.

Prejudice and unintended effects

GRC does not support project submissions that reproduce prejudice in wording or approach or leave foreseeable unintended effects without comment.

Aspects of academic sustainability

UZH is committed to transparent career and decision-making paths and enables early career researchers to plan their careers in the best possible way. Doctoral and postdoctoral researchers should receive the best possible support to develop their skills in line with their ambitions and to flourish in an intellectually stimulating environment. UZH promotes a culture of appreciation and recognition of diversity and supports early career researchers in various possible career paths. In doing so, early career researchers are responsible for effectively planning their own academic career path. Please note that a clear understanding of how your current research project fits within the context of your career plan and academic discipline is also a relevant dimension for GRC award decisions. Consideration of a number of questions may provide guidance to you and us here:

- Why is it the right time for the specific project?
- Why is UZH the right place for the specific project?
- Is the GRC Career or Short Grant the appropriate funding instrument?
- Do you have an appropriate academic support network to carry out the research project?
- What positive and negative spin-offs and spillovers can be expected from the project?
- What are the next scientific and institutional career steps after completion of the proposed project?

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