

CCCZ: COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER ZURICH

CCCZ Precision Oncology Funding Program 2026
Guidelines Lighthouse Project (v1.0_2026)

**COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTER
ZURICH**

The University Center
for Personalized Oncology
in Switzerland

CCCZ PRECISION ONCOLOGY FUNDING PROGRAM – 2026 CALL FOR LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT GUIDELINES

The Comprehensive Cancer Center Zurich (CCCZ) the joint oncology center of excellence of the University of Zurich (UZH) and University Hospital Zurich (USZ), including the Balgrist University Hospital and the University Children's Hospital Zurich. CCCZ strives for excellence in cancer research and cancer medicine, tight collaborations between scientists and physicians as well as patient representatives, and professional education in oncology. Our mission is to provide excellence in cancer medicine and implement innovative research programs towards precision oncology for the benefit of patients.

The competitive CCCZ Precision Oncology Funding Program for Lighthouse Projects aims to foster outstanding translational cancer research networks. The proposed research must:

- Meet the mission of CCCZ as a Comprehensive Cancer Center of Excellence.
- Address an unmet clinical need.
- Encompass innovative science with clearly visible potential for clinical translation.
- Combine innovative clinical oncology, research and technologies to develop novel diagnostic and therapeutic concepts towards precision oncology.
- Strengthen the research interface at CCCZ connecting the basic research environment with oncological patient care. Preferentially, projects must invest into the building of interdisciplinary infrastructure, workflows and expertise.
- Support and integrate early-career scientists and clinician scientists.

1. CONDITIONS FOR APPLICATION

- a. The research team should consist of at least **4 and at most 6 investigators**.
- b. Please **define one Principal Investigator (PI)** and up to five Co-investigators.
- c. The PI **must be a member of the faculties of Medicine or Science at UZH**.
- d. **The PI must have or confirm secured primary employment at an UMZH institution in Zurich** for the entire funding period (1.1.2027 – 31.12.2030), with guaranteed access to the home institution's infrastructure and services required for the research project.
- e. **Co-Investigators must have/confirm secured primary employment at an UMZH institution** for at least half of the funding period (1.1.2027-31.12.2028). If, at the time of submission of the full proposal, employment for at least half of the funding period cannot be confirmed a co-investigator, or if it is known that a co-investigator will leave (earliest) after half of the funding period, a succession plan and a successor must be defined and outlined in the full proposal.
- f. Research projects must **involve investigators from at least two CCCZ partner institutions** (UZH, USZ, Balgrist, Kispi).
- g. The research team must be interdisciplinary, involving **at least one basic scientist and one clinician scientist**.

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- h. **All investigators must be CCCZ members.** Please click [here](#) to find an overview of current CCCZ members. **Exception:** The CCCZ funding program aims to foster career development of early-career scientists. Max. one Co- investigator can be an early-career scientist. An early-career scientist is within 2-7 years after completing their highest degree (e.g. a PhD or equivalent), has not yet established full research independence or is in the early stages of building an independent career, may hold a postdoc, junior group leader, assistant professor, or early-stage principal investigator position and is no older than 35 years.
- i. Further investigators from UMZH institutions (ETH Zurich, UZH, USZ, Balgrist, KISPI, PUK) are allowed as **collaborators**. Collaborators might not be CCCZ members.
- j. 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.
- k. Balance and **equal opportunities** are strongly encouraged when building the research team.
- l. **PIs** must not participate in more than one application as PI, but they may apply as Co-investigator in other applications.
- m. **Co-investigators** are eligible to participate in more than one application.
- n. **PIs of CCCZ-funded Lighthouse Projects receiving active funding in 2027-2029** are not eligible to apply as PI in this call. However, they may participate as Co-investigators.
- o. **Co-investigators involved in CCCZ-funded Lighthouse Projects receiving active funding in 2027-2029** are eligible to apply as PIs or Co-investigators.
- p. **Project extensions** or follow-up projects of former Lighthouse Projects are not eligible.
- q. Applicants must state if a proposal for the project has been submitted to or is funded by another **funding body** (If yes: funding body, funding amount and expected date of funding decision must be provided).
- r. In case of collaborations with third parties, any **background IP** (preexisting IP) relevant to the project must be disclosed. Clear statements on potential future commercial development of the background IP must be delivered with the full proposal. Please explain how potential **foreground IP** (new IP created during a collaboration or research and development project) and the exploitation of it will be managed in collaboration with the third parties. Written agreements are not requested, however a general agreement on the use of foreground IP (e.g., a 50/50 arrangement) must be addressed and formulated in the application.
- s. Projects involving tumor sample processing are encouraged to make use of the [CCCZ Sample Processing Lab](#).
- t. Projects must ensure that **data sharing** complies with ethical, legal and institutional requirements. Proposals must demonstrate willingness to adhere to data sharing policies that apply to IP considerations, open access policies, and publication rules of the CCCZ partner institutions.

2. FUNDING

- a. **Funding period: 1.1.2027-31.12.2030.**
- b. Earliest start for project funding is 1.1.2027.
- c. Successful projects will be funded with a **total sum of up-to CHF 2 Mio. for the period 2027-2030. 2027: CHF 475K / 2028: CHF 500K / 2029: CHF 550K / 2030: CHF 475K.** The approved budget tranches per year are subject to the "Jährlichkeitsprinzip", i.e. funds must be spent within the specified years accordingly. The requested annual budget must match (not exceed) the provided annual funding tranches specified above. It is not possible to shift annual budget allocations between funding years.
- d. Multiple applications/submissions of the project proposal to different funding bodies are permitted but must be declared in the full proposal
- e. CCCZ only grants full funding – partial funding is excluded.
- f. Double-funding (by another funding body for the same project) is not permitted.
- g. Applicants who receive funding approval from CCCZ must formally accept the project funding within 7 days of notification.
- h. Each grant encompasses funding for staff, consumables and service fees.
- i. **Staff:**
 - o Staff must be employed at the UZH or University Hospitals.

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- Funding will be provided for the salary of scientific employees: PhD candidates, postdoctoral or clinician scientists.
- A maximum of 0.5 FTE for a technical assistant can be funded.
- Preference will be given to projects that foster career development at CCCZ. CCCZ favors the integration of early-career scientists.
- All early-career scientists must be co-mentored by at least two of the applying investigators (from different departments).
- New recruitments and mobility are encouraged.
- j. **Consumables/Technologies:**
 - Funding will be provided to finance consumables and service fees for e.g. laboratory consumables, high-throughput technologies, necessary animal research, medical bioinformatics and clinical oncology.
- k. **Resources allocated to external collaborators** should not exceed 10% of total funds.
- l. Projects that use human samples, patient data or animal models will require the necessary **ethical and legal approvals** by the competent authorities (KEK, Swissmedic) as a prerequisite for the final allocation of funding.
- m. **Progress** of the project will be regularly **monitored**, which includes the submission of annual intermediate reports (scientific, financial and mentoring reports). At the end of the project a final report must be delivered.

3. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

- **Submission deadline for Letter of Intent: 15.4.2026 (use template).** A LOI submission is mandatory for coordination of the review process. Save PDF as **LastNamePI_Acronym_LH_LOI_CCCZ Call 2026**. All teams submitting a LOI will be eligible to submit a full proposal. There will be no intermediate evaluation of the LOIs, and applicants may begin preparing the full proposal immediately.
- **Submission deadline for Full Proposal: 7.6.2026 (use templates)**
 - Please generate one PDF document of all application files in the following order:
 - Completed full proposal template (font: Calibri Light 10 pt; line spacing: 1.15. Format must not be changed. Page restrictions must be adhered to. **Chapters 1-10 should not exceed 10 pages**).
 - Budget Plan.
 - CVs of all investigators (max. 2 pages each).
 - If applicable, letters of collaboration.
 - If applicable, agreements on IP.
 - Additional/other attachments are not permitted.
 - Save PDF as **LastNamePI_Acronym_LH_FP_CCCZ Call 2026**.
 - Please submit the application files by email to maja.zenz.uzh.ch

4. TIMELINES AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- 17.3.2026 – Call for proposals.
- 15.4.2026 – Submission Letter of Intent.
- 7.6.2026 – Submission Full Proposal.
- 15.6.-2.8.2026: Evaluation of all proposals by a panel of external reviewers.
- 30.9.2026 – On-site Hearing & Review. Please save the date for the on-site hearing of the top-ranked proposals on 30.9.2026, 9.00-16.00h.
- Oct 2026: Communication of evaluation results to all applying PIs.
- 01.01.2027: Start Project Funding.

5. CONTACT

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