



University of
Zurich ^{UZH}

ETH zürich



University
of Basel



feminno – female
innovation and career
development in
Sciences

Guide for applicants

feminno – female innovation and career development in Sciences

The programme is coordinated by the Zurich-Basel Plant Science Center and supported by the Career Services, the office for Gender Equality and Diversity, the Graduate Campus of University of Zurich, the Life Sciences of ETH Zurich and University of Zurich, the Faculties of Medicine and Sciences, University of Zurich and the Department of Environmental System Sciences at ETH Zurich.

Are you a female scientist or an alumna from a Swiss University (incl. related academic institutions), the ETH Domain or a Swiss University of Applied Sciences interested in innovation and personal development?

Are you interested in career opportunities, especially in Switzerland, at the interface between research, innovation and industry?

Do you want to develop your ideas into an innovation, or you are asking yourself how your ideas could generate a new technology, product or service either in cooperation with an enterprise or as a start-up? Are you looking for know-how to launch such a process?

Are you asking yourself how to develop your talents with a positive work-life balance?

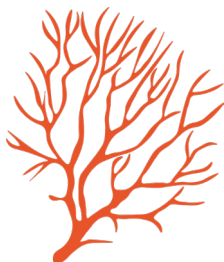
Do you want to increase your self-confidence, internalise your strengths and trust your decisions with the support of qualified mentors?

In this case, this career programme is just right for you!

What can you expect?

feminno offers mentoring and career development for female scientists interested in innovation.

Experienced career advisers, coaches, innovation experts and executives from successful enterprises share their work experience and will inspire you to pro-actively mature your ideas and your personal development.



Innovation ecosystem

feminno's focus is on idea generation. For this you will be able to enlarge your network outside academia and learn how to evaluate the potential of your idea. In addition, you will receive advice and access to funding opportunities to start your own innovation project.

Deliverables

At the end of the programme you will be able to assess ideas for its innovation potential, not just from a scientific standpoint but also including a business perspective. You have completed your first Business Canvas, which may serve as a guide on future assessments.

You will be able to make a sound and educated decision about your next career move and have the necessary network to do so successfully. feminno has proven as a stepping stone for many participants.

You will be clear on your competencies and have improved significantly some of your pain points. A personal Action Plan will be one outcome of the programme. In addition qualified mentors will be available to support you after completion of the programme.

Programme

The programme (call 9) starts in September 2025 and comprises of the following stages

Career retreat

23-25 Sep 2025, three full day sessions
with [Dr Daniela Gunz, Career Services, University of Zurich](#)

Innovation Workshop

Create a Business Model Canvas

14-17 Oct 2025, two full day sessions
with [Isabelle Siegrist, Sandborn](#)

Innovation seminars

Second half of Nov 2025, exact dates TBC
with [Dr Andrea Haag, ETH Transfer](#);
[PD Dr Joëlle Schwarz, Unisante, Lausanne](#);
[Michael Kropac, seecon](#); [Dr Verena Lütschg, About Tomorrow Consulting](#); [Dr Andrea Degen, STI Management AG](#)

Negotiation skills for conflict situations, business deals

20-21 Jan 2026, two full day sessions
with [Gaby Rockmann, Rockmann Consulting](#)

Company visits

Jan to Feb 2026, two company visits
(Roche, Bio-Technopark Schlieren)

Closing event

Presentations, Networking & Celebration:
Early March 2026

Please note: All workshops will be held in person, in Zurich.



Company visit at ROCHE, February 2025. Photo: Roche.



feminno participants ideas
after 2-days Innovation
Workshop, October 2024.
Photo: Daniela Gunz.

**We strengthen your career competencies
on the basis of your own resources.**

feminno offers career counseling and clarifies your demands and expectations

Career retreat

- › A three-day intensive career retreat offers you the opportunity to reflect on:
- › Your competencies.
- › Your resources.
- › Your faith in my abilities.
- › Your motivation.
- › Your goals.

Control know yourself

**feminno helps to plan the next steps and work in
more detail on your project ideas**

Mentoring

- › Provide explanations and support to the world of start-up.
- › Help you to set up your own portfolio.
- › Assist in finding suitable mentors from industry or start-up ecosystem.
- › Member of the feminno network and participation in regular events.

Concern plan

feminno offers competency-oriented training and helps to build your innovation ecosystem

Innovation workshop

- › **Mature your idea and create a Business Model Canvas.**

Innovation seminars

- › **Where does innovation come from?**
Introduction to the basic principles of innovation management.
- › **Gender-based perspectives in the innovation process**
Does my idea offer gender-based application scenarios?
- › **Pitch training**
How to present your project successfully.
- › **Funding your project**
Presentation of various European and Swiss start-up financing instruments, incl. BioEntrepreneur Fellowship program and Innosuisse funding.
- › **Present your own project at the closing event!**
Present your innovation ecosystem. What companies do you intend to approach as cooperation partners?

Confidence tools

feminno creates opportunities

Curiosity know opportunities

Company visits

- › **Raise your visibility**
Women are less visible to private industry and less present in the hidden job market. Only 60–70 % of all appointments are channeled through regular recruiting platforms: all other positions are filled through personal contacts! For this reason, it is immensely important to present yourself and your research to industrial executives and leaders.
- › **Visits to private enterprises**
Role models can open doors to new career tracks. You will meet highly qualified women working in R&D, in leading corporate positions or as entrepreneurs – a valuable insight into the world outside of academia.

Who can participate?

The programme addresses female researchers from all faculties currently working as a PhD student, Postdoc and Researchers at a Swiss University (incl. related academic institutions), the ETH Domain or a Swiss University of Applied Sciences.

Recent alumnae from a Swiss University and young female professionals can join the programme through the ETH School for Continuing Education.

Evaluation criteria

The selection of applications is done based on the following criteria:

Relevance for career development

- › Does the CV show that the applicant will profit from the programme?
- › Is the personal development plan convincing?
- › Has the applicant convincingly expressed her commitment for participating in the programme?
- › Will the programme give the applicant the new key competencies that will enable her to achieve her own and the program's goals?

Relevance of research

- › Are its innovative aspects evident?
- › Has the applicant outlined how her research results could be transformed into an innovative product or application?



«When I started the *feminno* programme, I had an idea what I wanted to do in life, but it wasn't a clear idea. The very first workshop, that was about "Designing your life" gave me so much insight and space to reflect, so that in the following weeks, things have become much clearer in my mind. In the 3 months after, I quit my corporate American job, signed the contract for a new job, and successfully deployed my non-profit organization in the Philippines. *feminno* was a big part of this journey, and I would like to thank Daniela for making it happen. May many women get the same clarity that I got during their time at *feminno*.»

Marion Schleifer, *feminno* round 8



«The *feminno* programme provided me with insights on how to approach my ideas, whether they were worth developing, and, moreover, how to develop them. The programme consisted of a variety of trainings, including creating a business model canvas—something I hadn't had the chance to gain hands on experience with before— as well as meeting entrepreneurs, which allowed for valuable experience exchange. The environment during the workshops was very friendly, supportive, and comfortable. The programme is definitely an opportunity for women in science who want to take their ideas a step further.»

Merve Tunali, *feminno* round 8

Call 9

Opens: 9 June 2025

Closes: 31 July 2025

Notification of acceptance:
15 August 2025**Tuition language**

The programme language is English.

Location

Please mind that most seminars will take place in Zurich and participation is mandatory and will be tracked. Some lectures may be hold virtually.

Credit points

PhD students will receive 4 ECTS that are fully accredited in their PhD Programmes; Postdocs will receive a certificate of attendance and 120 hours accredited to the PSC Career Development Programme for Postdocs. Alumnae and young professionals that join the programme through the ETH School for Continuing Education will receive a certification of successful completion.

Fees

CHF 2200 for Alumnae of a Swiss University

CHF 150 for PhD students at ETH Zurich (incl. EMPA, PSI etc.) or University of Zurich

CHF 400 for Postdocs at ETH Zurich (incl. EMPA, PSI etc.) or University of Zurich

CHF 800 for PhDs, Postdocs and researchers of all other Swiss Universities / Universities of Applied Sciences

Maximum number of participants

A maximum of 25 women per call will be admitted.

Information and application form
www.feminno.ch

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Project partners

Zurich-Basel Plant Science Center – University of Zurich, ETH Zurich & University of Basel
Life Science Zurich – University of Zurich & ETH Zurich
Office for Gender Equality – University of Zurich & University Basel
Career Services – University of Zurich