

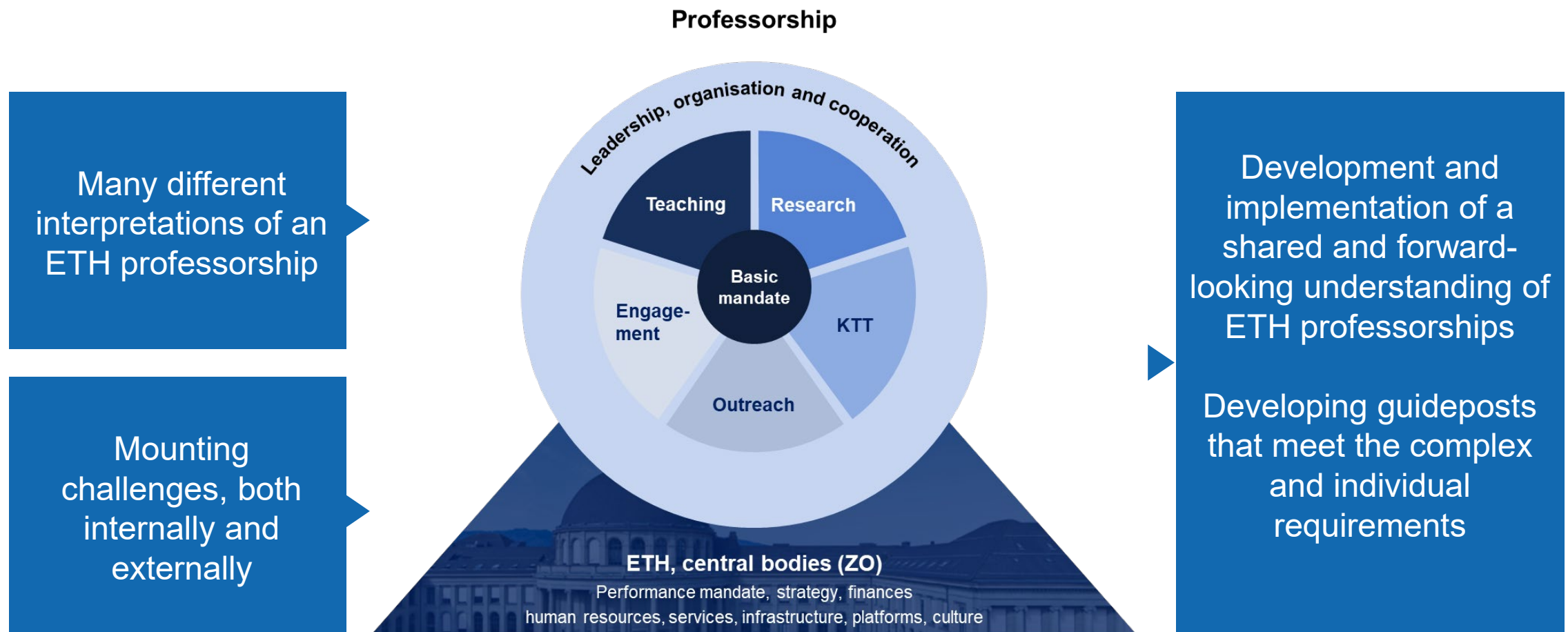
rETHink project  
– fit for the future

**Workstream 2 Professorships**

Operational Leadership  
Zurich, 6 April 2021



# WS 2 Professorships – From challenges to mission



# WS 2 Professorships – Participants

## Project leaders:

- Detlef Günther
- Nina Buchmann
- Markus Aebi
- Stefan Bechtold

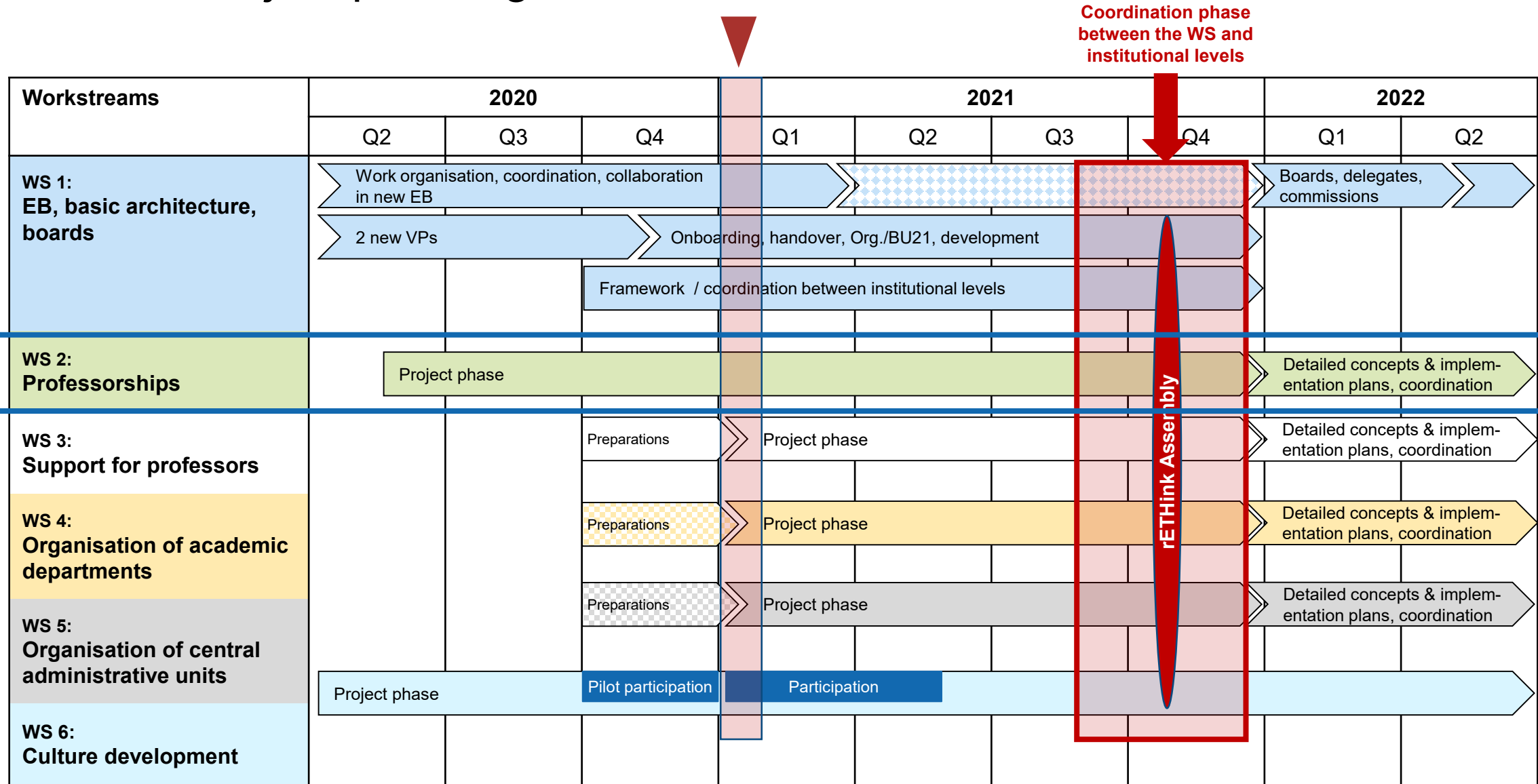
## Project support:

- Kathrin Ringger
- Elisabeth Pöschl
- Gabrielle Schlittler (ext.)

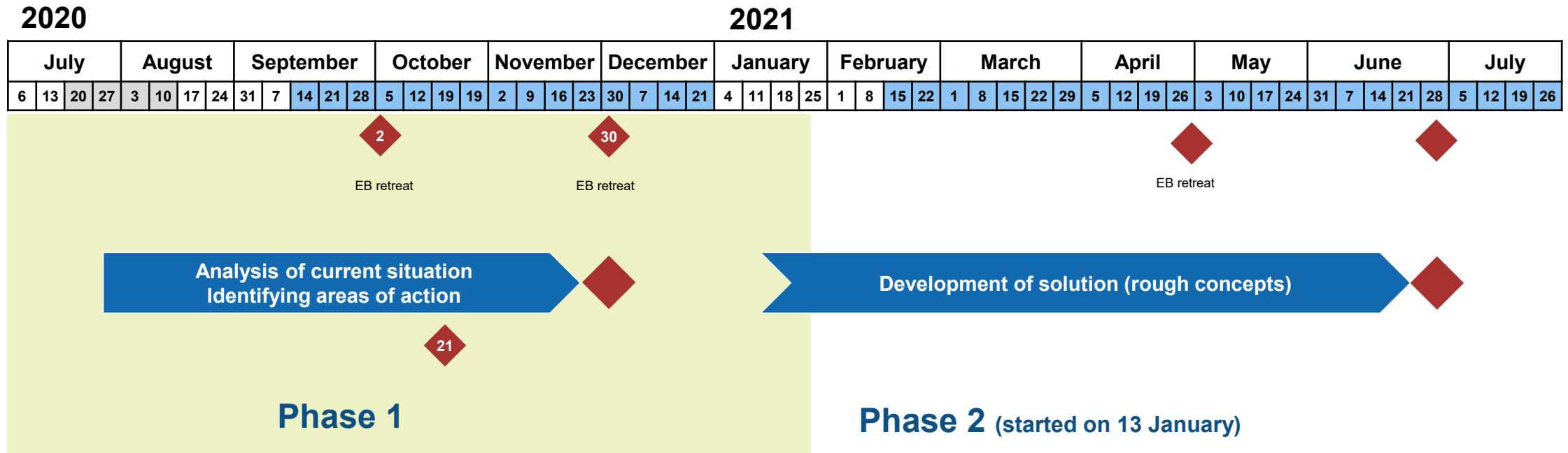
## Core team:

- Prof. Philippe Block, D-ARCH  
(also perspective of Engineering Sciences)
- Prof. Rachel Grange, D-PHYS (Natural Sciences and Mathematics)
- Prof. Volker Hoffmann, D-MTEC (Sustainability and Technology)
- Prof. David Norris, D-MAVT  
(Engineering Sciences and member of the Tenure Committee)
- Prof. André Studart, D-MATL (Materials Science /Complex Materials)
- Alexander Caspar, D-MATH (Senior Scientists representative)
- Stefan Karlen, D-GESS coordinator (Admin./tech. staff representative)
- Nicole Kasielke (Corporate Communications)
- Birgit Kessler (Office for Faculty Affairs representative)
- Eva Lieberherr, D-USYS (Senior Scientists representative)
- Corentin Pfister, Vice President VSETH (Students representative)
- Olga Pardo, Personnel and Organisational Development (HR)
- Christina Tsalicoglou, D-MAVT (Doctoral Students representative)

# rETHink Project planning



# Workstream 2 Professorships – Planning and milestones

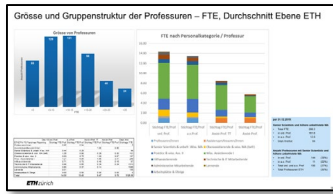


- **Common understanding of the current situation and areas of action** as an important precondition for working on solutions in the core team
- **Broad participation** for internal support and assuring the quality of analysis
- **Important basis for finding a solution** in Phase 2

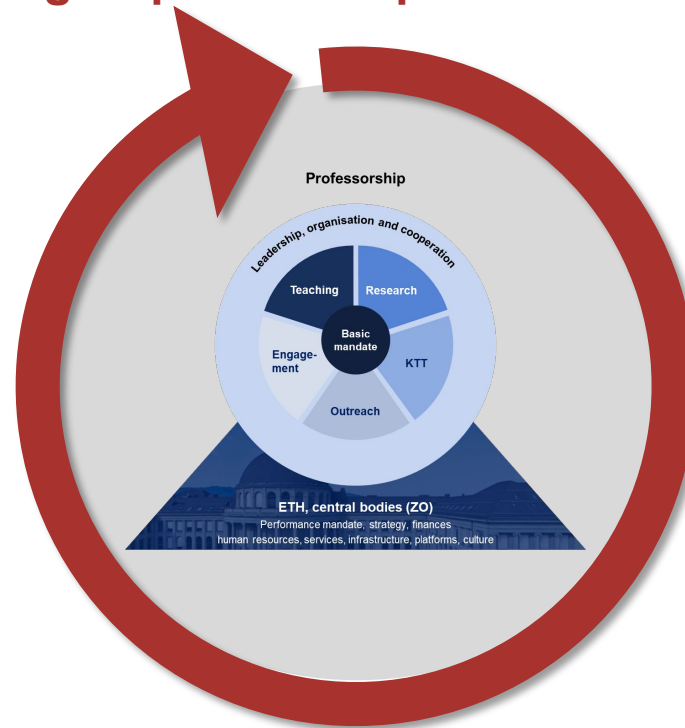
# Procedure for Phase 1: Analysis of the current situation and identifying the areas of action

**360° view of professorship**  
**27 focus groups with all personnel categories**

## Basic data



**Project team WS2**



## Presentation of analysis results

**Project team WS2**



**EB**



**ETH members**

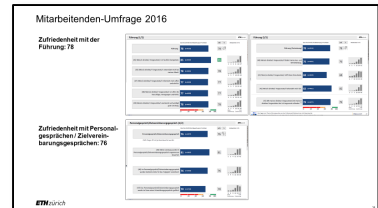
**Analyses by topic and personnel categories**

**Identify areas of action**

Yearstream 2 »Professoren«  
Ergebnisse der Gespräche mit den Fokusgruppen nach Thema

Ergebnisse der Gespräche mit den Fokusgruppen  
Konsolidierung nach Personalkategorie

## Survey



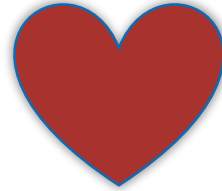
## Challenges

Herausforderungen für Professuren (13)

**131 persons involved**  
**262 input hours, contributing ideas and engagement**  
**54 hours of group discussions**

# Key findings of the analysis (1/4)

## Autonomy of the professorship



## “The university’s beating heart”

- **Academic autonomy and scientific freedom** combined with **government funding** as **clear strengths and USP** of ETH Zurich.
- Autonomy in the **organisation sphere** is also a **central success factor**.
- **Consequences and risks** of this autonomy are **recognised**.
- **Existing problems** are seen as the result of **failure to fully assume responsibility** in implementing autonomy rather than the consequence of the principle of autonomy

# Key findings of the analysis (2/4)

<b>Balance between the five tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Challenge</b> of finding the appropriate balance</li><li>• <b>Several priority tasks often fall short</b> (KTT, outreach and engagement)</li><li>• Consequences for the <b>performance level</b> and <b>fulfilment of ETH's service mandate</b> as a whole</li></ul>
<b>KTT, outreach and engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Importance and demands are intensifying</b></li><li>• <b>General conditions are often not ideal:</b> common understanding of the tasks, time, recognition, structures and profiles for these tasks</li></ul>
<b>New academic profiles and structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Repeatedly discussed, introduced in individual academic departments</b></li><li>• <b>Further development</b> seems to be <b>worth considering</b> in the face of mounting challenges</li></ul>
<b>Interdisciplinary collaboration and global challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Need to strengthen</b> interdisciplinary collaboration</li><li>• <b>Question of how best to promote collaboration</b></li></ul>



# Key findings of the analysis (3/4)

## Organisation of professorships

- **Flexibility and delegation options are a strength**
- **Indications** that the **current structures can no longer satisfy future demands** in all task areas
- **It seems right time to consider optimisation measures and even new types of organisation models** for specific tasks

## Leadership and management

- According to the 2016 staff survey, the **quality of leadership** is generally **rated as good** (with regard to doctoral student supervision)
- Evidence of topics within the professorship that need to be improved show the need to **strengthen professors' leadership and management skills**
- Professors currently only receive **limited training for their leadership and management tasks**
- **The resulting gaps** can affect **performance levels** and carry a **reputation risk**
- The **negative effects could increase** with **mounting demands**

## Evaluation system

- There is no **holistic and effective assessment system** covering the entire professorship and also the leadership role of professors

# Key findings of the analysis (4/4)

<b>Flexible use of space and infrastructures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Topic becoming more important</b> due to the university's growth and political demands</li><li>• Various reasons why it is <b>currently difficult to exploit these synergies</b></li></ul>
<b>Services of the central administrative units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many positive, but also critical comments about services provided by central administrative units</li><li>• <b>Improvement needed in specific processes</b> in the following areas: VPPL/HR, Corporate Communications, ETH Transfer, Legal Office and also IT Support in connection with digitalisation</li></ul>
<b>Measures already taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>It is encouraging</b> that some measures have already been taken to address identified problems, in the form of new regulations and ordinances</li><li>• The question is <b>why have these measures not (yet) had an effect</b></li><li>• Systematic <b>implementation controls are not being carried out</b></li></ul>

# Fields of action derived from analysis

## Strategy - WHAT

(Duties, strategies, goals, guidelines)

1 Academic autonomy, taking responsibility as well as clarification of guidelines / internal conditions for individual areas of responsibility

2 Global challenges and interdisciplinary cooperation

13 Consequences for the appointment process (attn. WS3) part 1

## Organisation - HOW

(Structures, processes, regulations)

3 New academic profiles and groups

4 KTT

5 Outreach

6 Organisational autonomy and taking of responsibility (incl. internal engagement)

7 Internal organisation of a professorship

10 Enhancing flexibility of the allocation and use of space and infrastructure (attn. WS4)

11 Set of measures to support the implementation of already defined regulations, processes and services

12 Support by the departments and central administrative units (attn. WS4 and WS5)

## Leadership, cooperation, culture

8 Strengthening leadership and leadership development (attn. WS3)

9 Evaluation/appreciation of professorships und professors (attn. WS3)

# WS 2 phase 2 – Development of solutions

Coordination phase between the WS and institutional levels

January				February				March					April				May				June				July				August				September				October				November				December						
4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27
<b>Overarching deadlines</b>																																																			
												30								28								13				1				29															
								2.2				2.3				13.4				4.5				1.6				29.6				24.8				rETHink Symposium 5.10				2.11				14.12							

