

Transferring Citavi projects to Zotero

In this guide, we show you how to transfer your Citavi projects to Zotero

The steps

- First install Zotero
- If needed, create a local project copy of your Citavi cloud project
- Make a backup copy of your local project
- Unzip backup copy
- Add attachments
- Import to Zotero

Installing Zotero

Download: <https://www.zotero.org/download/>

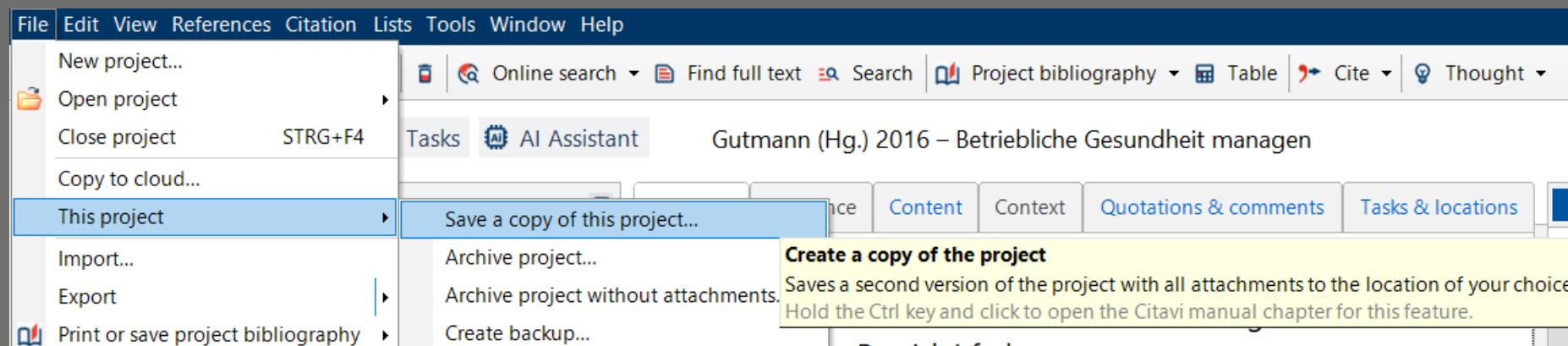
Don't forget to also install the Zotero Connector (for Firefox, Chrome or Edge; Safari is not recommended)

Create a local project copy of your Citavi cloud project

a. Cloud projects (for local projects proceed to b.)

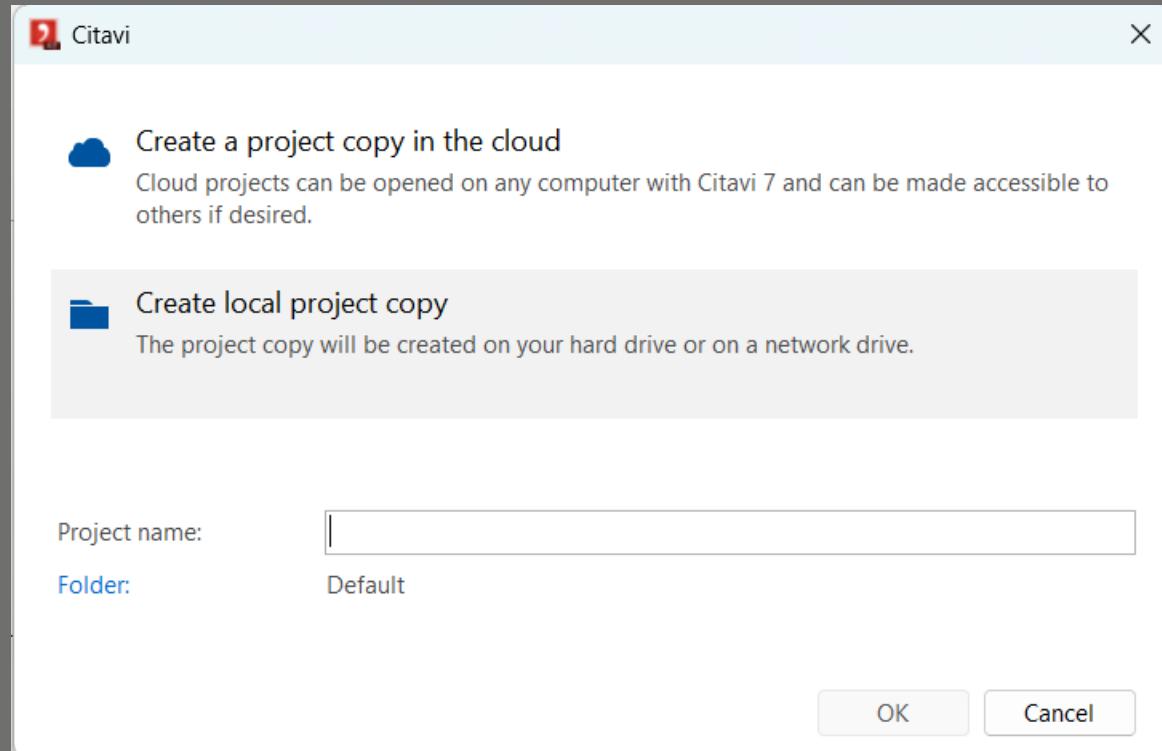
Cloud projects will first need to be converted to local projects.

To do this, open the cloud project in Citavi. Then click on *File > This project > Save a copy of this project...*



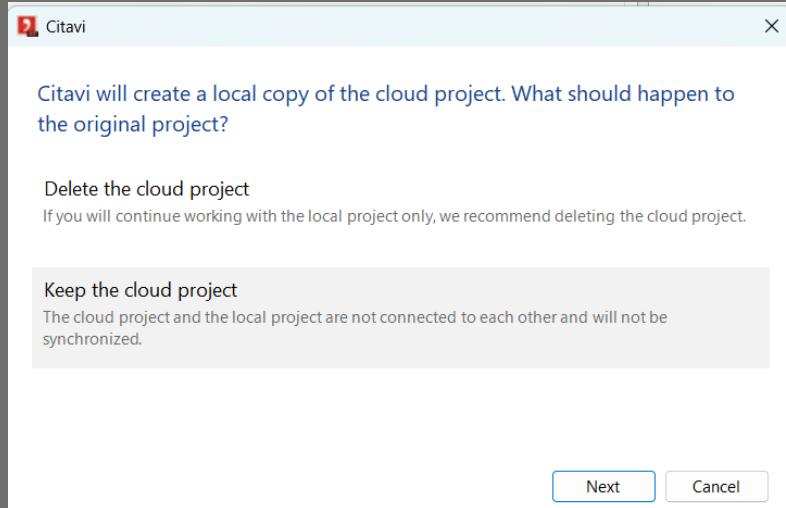
Create a local project copy of your Citavi cloud project

*Create local project copy > Put a meaningful name in the *Project name* field > if applicable, store the backup file in an extra folder > Next*

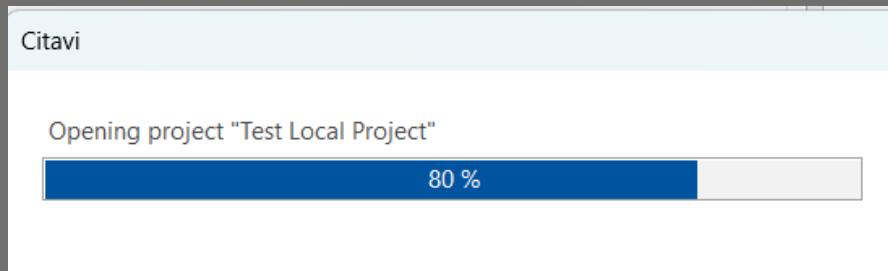


Create a local project copy of your Citavi cloud project

Then decide whether to delete or keep the original cloud project.



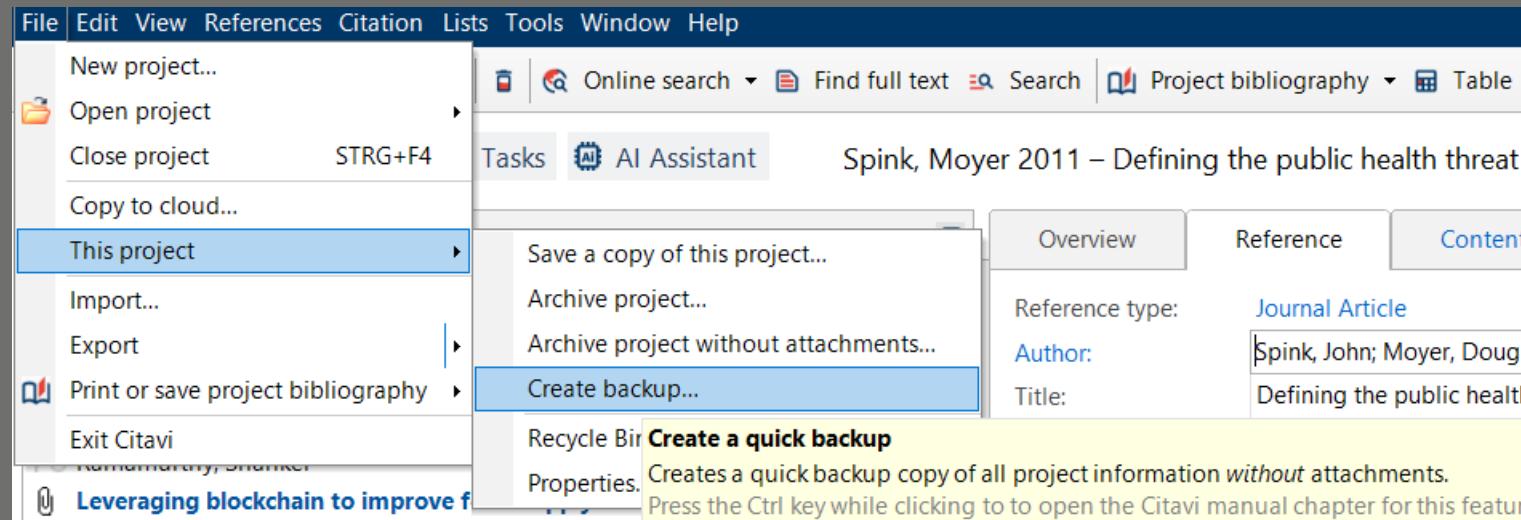
Once the download is complete, the new local project will be created and opened.



Create a backup copy of your local project

b. Local projects – creating a backup copy

In the (new) local project: *File > This project > Create backup...*



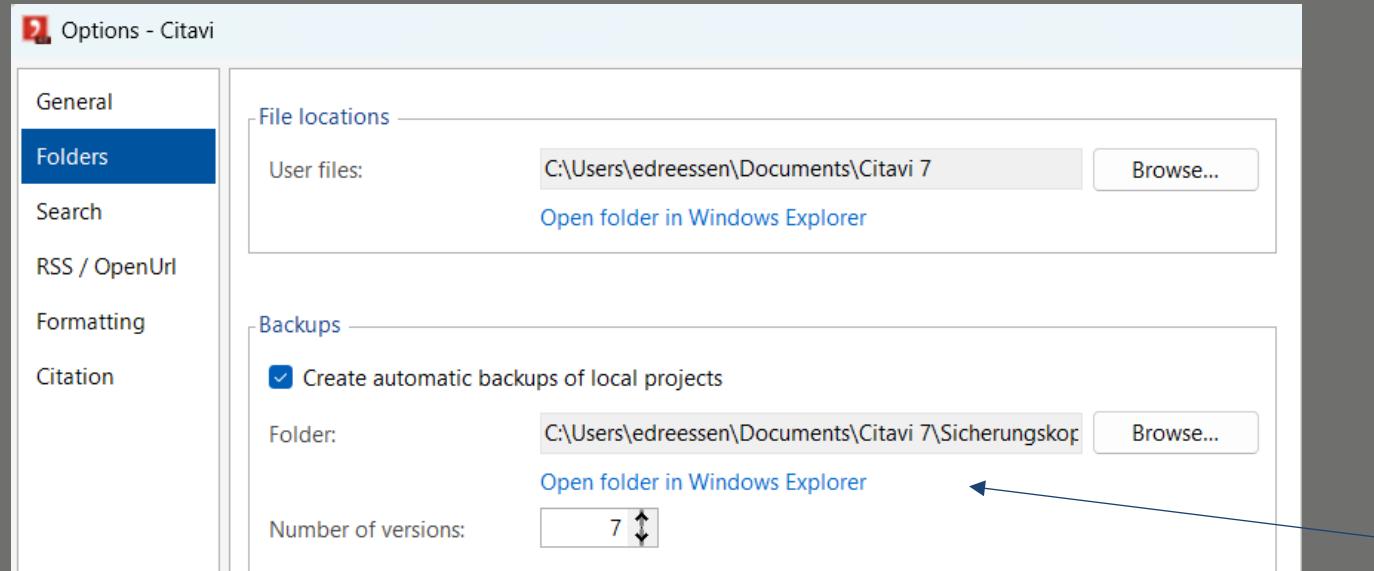
You can find the file location under *Tools > Options > Folders*. The default location is

C:\Users\<username>\Documents\Citavi 7\Backup

(If there is another Citavi 6 or 7 folder in the Citavi 6 or 7 folder, reopen this folder and navigate to the “Backup” folder.)

Create a backup copy of your local project

Here you can open the *Backups* folder in the Windows Explorer:



The file will be saved with the extension *ctv6bak* (or *ctv7bak*). You can also change the save location.

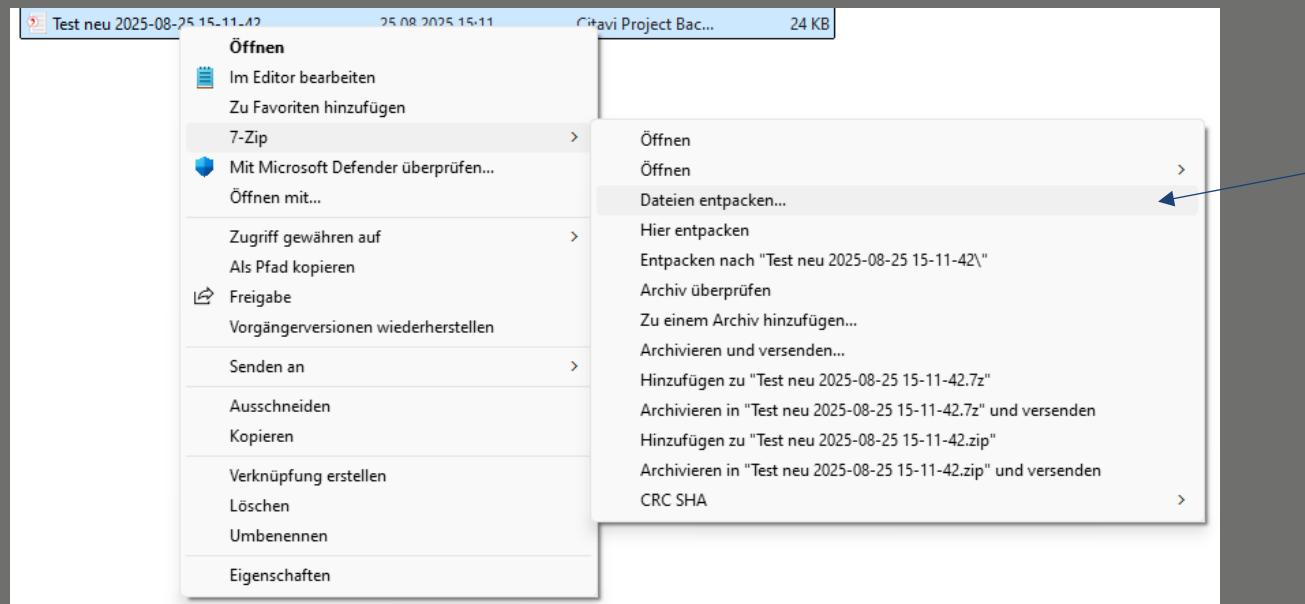
Note: Creating a backup for very large Citavi projects can take some time. Before continue, check in Citavi whether all background tasks are completed.

Unzip backup copy

Unzip backup copy

The *ctv6bak* file is a zip file and has to be unzipped, for example with 7-Zip or a similar programme. To do this, right-click on the backup file and select *Show more options* > *7Zip* > *Unzip file...*

If you do not yet have the 7-Zip programme installed, you can download it here: <https://www.7-zip.de/>



The extracted file will be saved in the same folder, or you can change the location.

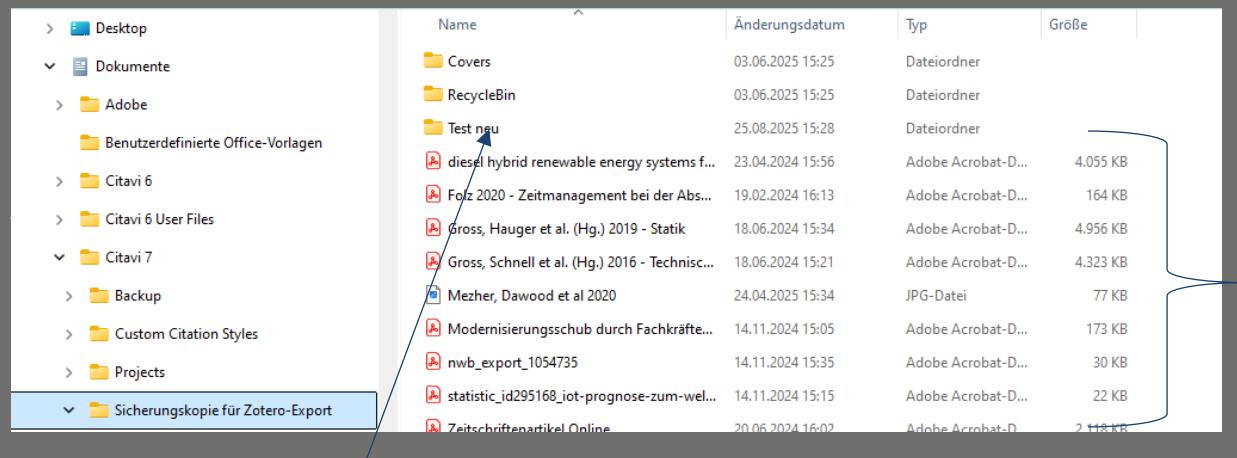
Attachments

Including attached documents (PDFs etc.)

In order for the attached documents to also be imported into Zotero, they must be located in the same folder as the extracted *ctv6bak* file.

The default location for the Citavi attachments is: C:\Users\<username>\Documents\Citavi\Projects\<name of the project>\Citavi Attachments

Copy these documents from there into the folder where the *ctv6bak* file is located.



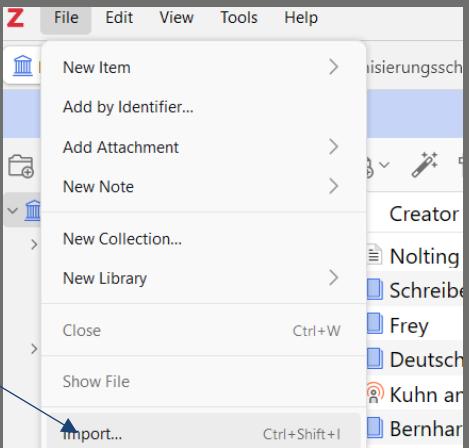
Right-click here → the included Citavi project file is required for import to Zotero:

statistic_id295168_iot-prognose-zum-wel...	14.11.2024 15:15	Adobe Acrobat-D...	22 KB
Test neu	25.08.2025 15:11	Citavi Project	122 KB

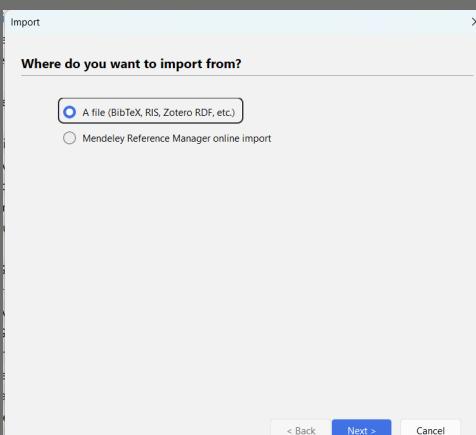
Import to Zotero

Import to Zotero

Open Zotero. *File > Import...*

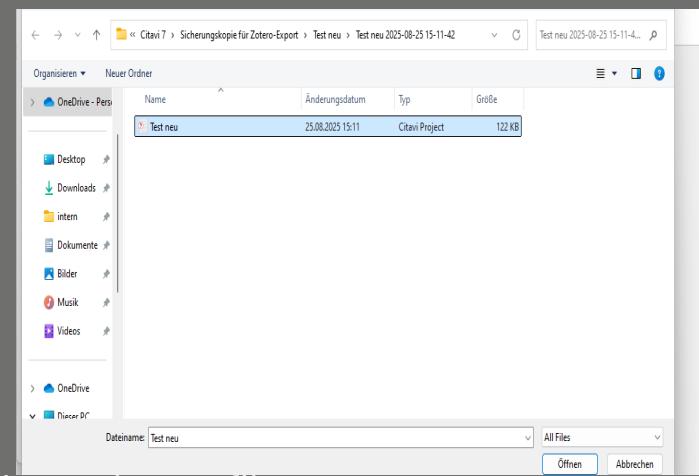


Choose A file (BibTeX, RIS, Zotero RDF, etc.), then click *Next*.

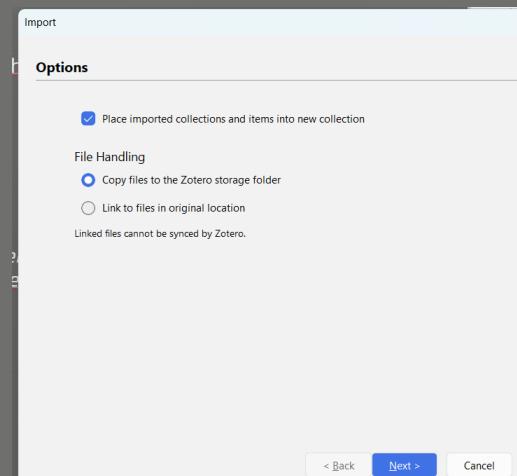


Import to Zotero

Select the unzipped file (only the file, not the PDFs etc.).



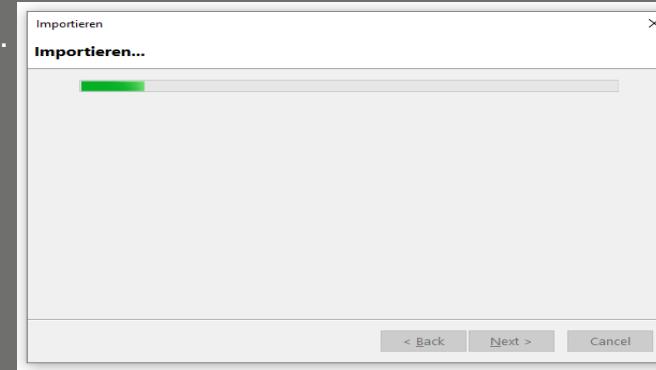
In the following window select *Place imported collections and items into new collection* and *Copy files to the Zotero storage folder*



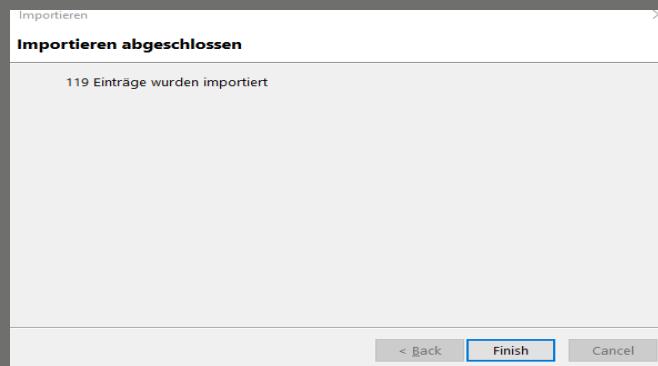
If you check the box for “*Place imported collection and items into new collection*”, a separate collection will be created for each imported Citavi project. If you don't want this, uncheck the box. The projects will then all be merged into a single Zotero library.

Import to Zotero

Please wait for a moment until the Citavi project is imported to Zotero.

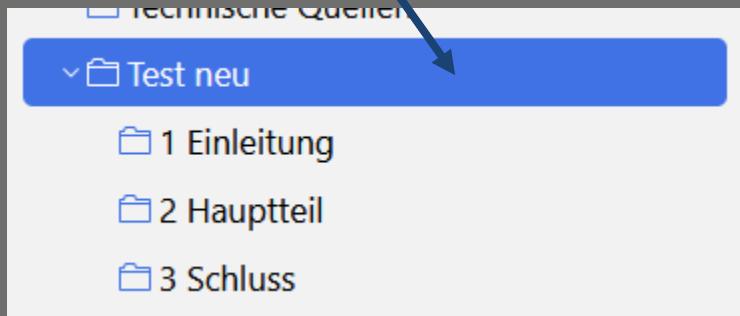


There will be a notification once the import of the project is complete.



Import to Zotero

Zotero will then create a new collection with sub-collections for your imported project. This collection is named according to the name you gave your *ctv7bak* file; the project name from Citavi was retained here.



Notes:

- Multiple Citavi projects can be managed in a single Zotero library.
- After transferring to Zotero, you may need to do some post-processing
- Don't give up, if it doesn't work the first time!

Sources:

[Zotero website](#), [instructions of the UB Mannheim](#), [KIT library Karlsruhe](#), [video tutorial of the UB Bamberg](#)