

Call for proposals in energy research - Nordic Flagship Projects

[updated for full proposal phase II, changes highlighted]

Nordic Energy Research launches a call for proposals of 80 million NOK. Invited Nordic research consortia are invited to submit full proposals by May 12th 2015.

The Nordic countries have all adopted ambitious energy and climate visions towards 2050. Their fulfilment will require a comprehensive transition of the Nordic energy system with far-reaching implications for Nordic societies at large. Progress towards these targets is dependent on the development and deployment of sustainable energy technologies and system solutions, and on the enactment of progressive energy policies. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has highlighted the crucial role of research cooperation between the Nordic countries in facilitating this transition.¹ Starting in 2015, the Nordic Flagship Projects will be the central instrument of Nordic intergovernmental cooperation in furthering this cooperation and in contributing to energy system transition in the Nordic region.

Nordic Energy Research funds and supports Nordic cooperation in world-class energy research and development, facilitating national ambitions of sustainability, economic development and competitiveness. The organisation's overarching goals are threefold:

1. Build research cooperation and competencies within the development of sustainable energy solutions.
2. Provide research-based analytical support to energy technology decision-making.
3. Enhance the knowledge base for increased competitiveness of the Nordic energy system and disseminate Nordic sustainable energy solutions.

1. Nordic Flagship Projects

This call of 80 million NOK aims to support three to five Nordic Flagship Projects for a period of three to four years. These ambitious and high-profile projects will address interdisciplinary research questions from a Nordic perspective, contributing to the achievement of national energy and climate targets. The projects will facilitate in-depth and effective cooperation between Nordic research environments, world-class energy research and development activities, and the production of politically relevant research results.

The Nordic Flagship Projects will be led by research institutions, but are strongly encouraged to include influential partners from industry to increase the

¹ [IEA, 2013. Nordic Energy Technology Perspectives.](#)

relevance and impact of the research activities. Governmental and non-governmental partners are also encouraged where relevant. Co-financing is not required but strongly encouraged. In addition to Nordic partners, projects are encouraged to include Baltic and North-West Russian partners where relevant. The financing of PhDs within projects is welcome providing they become a natural, integrated part of the project.

The thematic scope of the call covers natural and social science-based research on energy technologies and systems that are critical to the achievement of national energy and climate targets and visions. Proposals should be well aligned with the Nordic Energy Research Strategy for 2015-2018 (see Attachment 1), which offers further direction on key thematic challenges facing the region. Nordic Energy Research also encourages applicants to relate the proposal to the report *Nordic Energy Technology Perspectives 2013*.

Proposals must strongly reflect the following three principles from the Nordic Energy Research Strategy for 2015-2018: Nordic added value, system perspective and political relevance.

Nordic added value

Projects should provide clear Nordic added value by addressing research questions that are best suited to a Nordic approach, that are common to multiple Nordic countries, and that are unique to the Nordic region. Proposals should explain why the project falls outside the scope of, or provides additionality to, research and development funding at the national and EU levels. Projects should also look to enhance and develop Nordic integration, network-building and information exchange both during and beyond the project period.

System perspective

Projects should address challenges at the system level – addressing broader aspects of a sustainable energy system such as competitiveness and societal impacts where feasible. Micro-level technological research findings should be contextualised at the macro-level, demonstrating their potential within the broader energy system. Nordic Energy Research expects projects to include multidisciplinary research activities where relevant, covering for example natural sciences, economics, social sciences, energy system modelling, or analysis of markets and regulatory frameworks as required in order to solve the targeted challenge.

Political relevance

Projects should tackle issues of high relevance in the achievement of national energy and climate targets and visions. Project results should have both scientific merit as well as direct relevance and applicability to the needs of Nordic policy-makers and other decision-makers. To achieve this, projects must demonstrate adequate planning and capability to successfully communicate findings to a broad range of stakeholders. These stakeholders include: Academia, through scientific journals and publications; the public, through popularised dissemination in mass media and conferences; and the political level, including the Nordic Ministers of Energy and Industry. Dissemination must not only be reserved for a final report or conference, but rather addressed continuously throughout the project period in a way that is communicable, interesting, and relevant to secure impact in the national energy debates of the Nordic countries. Partnerships with relevant and influential organisations in the sector should be leveraged to achieve visibility for the research activities and disseminate project results.

2. Formal requirements

- A. Research consortia partners based in the Nordic countries² are eligible for funding. The research consortium must involve partners from at least three Nordic countries. Partners based in the Baltic countries and North-West Russia³ are also eligible for funding, and their involvement is encouraged, providing they become a natural, integrated part of the project. Partners outside these countries may participate in the research consortium but are not eligible for funding from Nordic Energy Research.
- B. Co-financing is encouraged, but is not required. 100 % of project costs for all partners is eligible for funding. Grants to partners outside Nordic Energy Research's definition of a Research Organisation are limited to the equivalent of 200 000 EUR per partner per 3 fiscal year period in accordance with EU/EFTA regulations on *de minimis* aid. The 3 fiscal years are calculated on a rolling basis throughout the up to 4-year project period. For further details see Attachment 2.
- C. The ownership of any Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) resulting from the project, as well as related access rights, must be allocated to the different collaboration partners in a manner which adequately reflects their workload, contributions and respective interests.
- D. The formal applicant (Project Owner) must be a Research Organisation based in one of the Nordic countries. The Project Manager must be an established senior researcher from this Research Organisation. Nordic Energy Research will enter into a contract with and disburse the grant to this Research Organisation, which will be responsible for the administration and completion of the research project.
- E. Projects must begin before December 1st 2015 and must operate continuously for a period of 3 to 4 years. Total funding sought from Nordic Energy Research must be between 10 and 30 million NOK.
- F. Pre-proposals must be submitted electronically through the call system accessible via www.nordicenergy.org. The Project Description Template (available for download on the call website) must be used and the instructions it includes regarding length, formatting and budgeting must be adhered to. Nordic Energy Research does not apply a fixed ceiling to hourly rates or overhead, but instead cost effectiveness is included in the evaluation criteria.
- G. Letters of intent signalling institutional commitment from all participating partners must be provided together with the full proposal (Phase II).

² The Nordic countries are defined here as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the autonomous areas of Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the Åland Islands.

³ The Baltic countries include Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. North-West Russia is defined here as regions bordering the Nordic or Baltic countries, including Arkhangelsk Oblast, Kaliningrad Oblast, Leningrad Oblast, Murmansk Oblast, Pskov Oblast, the Republic of Karelia and the city of St Petersburg.

3. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria for pre-proposals and full proposals are found in Attachment 2.

4. Application process and timeline

The application process consists of two phases. In Phase I applicants must submit a pre-proposal. When pre-proposals have been evaluated by the Board of Nordic Energy Research, applicants will be notified whether their proposal has qualified for Phase II. In Phase II, full proposals will be evaluated by a panel of external international experts, who will deliver their evaluation to the Board of Nordic Energy Research. The Board will take the final funding decision based on the external expert panel's evaluation together with an additional evaluation of strategic relevance and cost effectiveness. See Attachment 2.

Phase II call opened: Qualified pre-proposals invited to submit full proposals	Monday, March 23 rd , 2015
Deadline for submitting full proposals	Tuesday, May 12 th , 2015, 13:00 CET
Decision: Successful full proposals to be invited to contract negotiations	Monday, June 29 th , 2015
Start-up meetings (contract negotiations and practicalities)	August 2015
Projects start	Between August 1 st , 2015 and December 1 st , 2015

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6. Further information

Download the Project Description Template and submit your proposal via:
<http://www.nordicenergy.org/call/nordic-flagship-projects-call-homepage/>

7. Attachments

- Attachment 1. Nordic Energy Research Strategy 2015-2018
- Attachment 2. Evaluation criteria and Eligibility