

Frequently Asked Questions: Updated 11th October 2022

Important: If the eligibility criteria are not met, the application will be dismissed.

Please note that all requirements listed in the Call must be met in order for applications to be forwarded to external evaluators. Before submitting the application, check eligibility criteria and national regulations (Appendix 1).

Q: Should research proposals focus on primarily investment in technology and infrastructure?

A: NER are seeking projects that “*assess technological, safety and socio-economical barriers for a hydrogen, ammonia and e-fuel based transition.*” Projects should identify and outline ambitious pathways towards 2030 and 2040 hydrogen value chains and infrastructure in energy hubs.

Q: Can non-Nordic partners participate in the project?

A: We welcome involvement of non-Nordic partners, but their involvement should be on a strictly in-kind/self-financing basis.

Q: How much money can each consortium receive?

Each consortium can apply for up to 20 mNOK. Consortium members from one country may receive up to 10 mNOK from their respective national financier. NER will provide top-up if applied funding exceeds 10mNOK.

Q: What is meant with «Private Companies»?

A: The term «private company» refers to any commercial entity that may have a role in creating a value chain for a hydrogen, ammonia and e-fuel based transition. This could for example be; technology providers, energy utilities, infrastructure owners, transportation companies, ports etc. This formulation does not exclude directorates, government agencies etc.

Q: Is the involvement of private companies mandatory?

A: Involvement of private companies is an eligibility-criteria and therefore mandatory. You should have at least two private companies from two different Nordic countries providing substantial in-kind contribution.

Q: Will it be possible to engage sub-consultants from the Nordic countries for specific minor tasks in the project (e.g., data delivery, dissemination support etc.) that are paid from one of the partners or should all actors (getting part of the funding) be included as partners?

A: We understand and accept the need for including sub-consultants to perform special tasks that are needed. They should be specified in the application but does not have to be included as full-fledged partners.

Q: Our application to this Call will primarily be "Industrial Research". According to State- Aid-Rules, an industrial partner can receive up to 50 percent support. Would it be possible to receive an additional 15 percent support for cost related to international/Nordic collaboration?

A: This issue should be addressed to the national funding organisation. In the "national eligibility check" the national funding organisation will consider if industry partners are eligible for the sought support in accordance with the State-Aid-Rules.

An example from the national regulations for Norway;

<https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/apply-for-funding/funding-from-the-research-council/Conditions-for-awarding-state-aid/>

If National regulations allows for de-minimis and State Aid, and a National Party have exhausted their budget, NER Co-Funds can be used. However, the sum of National funding a and NER Co-Funds cannot exceed € 200,000 of de minimis aid over a rolling period of three fiscal years.

Q: Which hourly rates should be applied?

A: This Call does not specify hourly rates. You may use the rates used in the respective Nordic countries as guidance. The team of external reviewers will consider if hourly rates, number of hours and also distribution of working hours between highly experienced (senior) and less experienced (junior) staff match the expected outcome/output of the application.

Q: What are required to be considered for support from each Nordic country?

A: In order to be eligible for funding, applicants have to meet both the general Eligibility criteria as well as respective National Regulations (see annex 1 to Call for further details).

Q: What is considered "substantial in-kind contribution"?

A: The Call text refers to "substantial in-kind contribution". We would regard an in-kind contribution 10 percent of the overall project cost of a project as "substantial". To be more precise; if consortium A applied for 20 million NOK we would expect that all partners in total provided at least 2 million NOK as in-kind - in addition to the funds provided. Higher levels of in-kind contributions might strengthen the application further.

Q: What is considered a research performing organisation (RPO)?

A: A research performing organisation is an entity, irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research and/or applied research (industrial research and experimental development).

Definition of RPOs from Research Council of Norway:

<https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/apply-for-funding/who-can-apply-for-funding/research-organisations/approved-research-organisations/>

"Senior Researcher"

With the term senior researcher, we refer to a person with an extensive experience in leading research projects of this kind, extensive list of peer-reviewed articles and the equivalent to a PhD-level degree. In academia, a senior researcher would typically be an associate professor or professor.

Authorised signature

The project owner (lead institution) and projects partners must provide signatures from persons with authority to commit the institutions to binding agreements (for instance Head of Department). Both name and position within the organization should be stated clearly (typed letters) in the Letter of Intent.

Questions and Answers arising from the Webinar 10th October 2022

Q: Do we have to submit separate documents/proposals to each country, or can everything be submitted as one consortium via the nordforsk portal?

A: You are expected to submit in the portal only, with all the documentation required as per the national requirements. NER will then distribute your application to the relevant national financiers for eligibility checks, and NER will be responsible for the evaluation process and selection of scientific reviewers.

Q: Would you please clarify which date you expect the consortia agreement to be ready?

A: Preferably the consortium agreement should be signed by the application deadline, but we know that this can be difficult for many industrial partners. Therefore, the consortium agreement must be signed no later than the kick-off date for the funded project, which we expect to be in March 2023.

Q: The deadline for the call does not correspond to any deadlines at Iceland's Technology Fund. How does the relationship between NER and Rannís work?

A: The deadline is for this dedicated budget, and the application must be submitted through the NER portal. Rannís is providing funding and will conduct a check against National Regulations governing Icelandic partners in consortias.

Q: Where can we put graphs and pictures?

A: The best option is to compile a pdf of no more than 2 pages and upload it in the portal. Some graphs and figures may be added in the text boxes, but sometimes the formatting will make this option difficult. Links to external pages will not become available for scientific reviewers.

Q: For Danmark it is written that 500 000 Euro is max pr consortium. Can that be topped with funding from NER?

A: Yes. Once the proposal is selected for funding the national financiers distribute their national budgets first, and NER applies the relevant top-up budget until all the funding is spent.

Q: Is it possible to define the “technical requirements”, in other words, will general technical contents be acceptable, or are you looking for work that contributes towards a deep fundamental understanding of the topic?

There is room for research as well as applied research, development, and demonstration. We expect the proposal to provide argumentation for the logic of the value chain that the research is part of.

Q: Our understanding is that the 20MNOK does not include in-kind contributions. So the total funding can therefore be larger than 20MNOK if we add the in-kind contributions.

A: Yes. If your proposal asks for 20 MNOK in funding, then the total budget must be larger than 22 MNOK. It is important to argue the value of the in-kind contributions.

Q: Let’s assume that a fallback case is created and that a research partner exits the consortium. Can the research be taken up by the other partners and their funds be redistributed by the remaining partners?

A: Research Consortia with three or more participating countries involved are required to offer fallback strategies for cases in which one of the involved national funding agencies considers a project partner as not eligible. Project proposals which do not pass the national eligibility check in at least two countries and which do not provide a fall-back strategy will not be considered for funding and will not be forwarded to the selection phase. The fallback case is not intended for situations that may arise after the project is started.

Q: For the nordic companies participating in the call, is cash contribution included in the requirement of >10% contribution?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it possible to involve industry partners without them having an own budget from NER (aside from their in-kind)?

A: Yes.

Q: The excel document called Hydrogen+budget+template only allows for 10 partners. Can this please be extended?

A: We will ask our technical support team to make this possible.

Q: Can you publish an example of Consortium Agreement?

A: The Consortium Agreement can be written in many ways. You may find inspiration here [EU Horizon 2020] or use your own standard agreement. What we look for is a set of rules for governing the consortium, how to reach agreement, who has which responsibilities, how to access and exploit background and foreground knowledge, how the administration is to be set up etc.

B: If an additional company is participating that is not Nordic, will their in-kind contribution be counted into the requirement of >10% contribution?

A: Yes. They will however not count for the remaining eligibility criteria.

Q: Do we need to address all topics in the scope in one consortium?

A: No. You must however argue for the selection that you make in your proposal. And you should cover a full value chain in your description of how the selected topics are relevant to the call.

Q: Is clean energy supply to produce hydrogen part of the scope of the call?

A: Yes. The production must however be argued into the value chain that it is relevant for and cannot stand alone or be the focus of the proposed work.

Q: Could you elaborate on the eligibility criterion for the project manager: 'Established senior' researcher?

A: The Project Manager must be an established senior researcher. This implies documented management experience of projects of the same magnitude and financial size. He/she should at least hold the position as an associate professor or above.

Q: Can the start date be later than specified in the call? Is there limit on duration?

A: Yes. We do not allow longer project duration than 3 years, but shorter may be accepted.

Q: It is a bit unclear how we should use the "participation+teams" template. Should we use it to describe the WPs or to describe each partner in the consortium? And how should it duplicate what is written in the "Project organisation and implementation" section?

A: "Participation+teams" should outline the partners and their specific competence. "Project organisation and implementation" should outline their tasks and roles in the overall implementation of the project (WP and sequence in the project timeline).

Q: Is focusing on one end use sector, e.g. the maritime sector too narrow?

A: It might be. Your proposal should work with several elements of the value chain. Make sure to anchor your selected topics within the call into a value chain, and to provide clear argumentation for those choices.

Q: Can we finance patent search from the project?

A: You may include patent search in your funded budget, but not actual patent application work. This may however be part of an in-kind contribution.

Q: If the rules are different between the countries which rules are the NER "topping" following?

A: National funding will be disbursed from National Parties. The National Parties will take the final funding decision on the national contributions, based on national regulations as well as the recommendations of the Steering Board. Applicants from Nordic countries should consult the following national regulations according to **Appendix 1 - National regulation** (see below). The NER Co-fund will be used to compensate cases where participating National Parties have exhausted their budget according to the ranking list. The NER Co-fund contribution shall be used to secure funding for the most qualified projects according to the assessment criteria.

Q: I have a question for Finnish research agency, is it a requirement that it is a Finnish company participating like Denmark has as requirement?

A: To receive the funding pledged from a national financier, at least one partner must be from that country.

Q: So if total applied amount for Danish partners exceeds 500k Euros it is still eligible?

A: Yes. The remaining budget will be provided from NER as top-up funding.

Q: Regarding the figures and tables: You said these should be put in the text boxes, but in the portal it is said that figures and tables should be combined to a separate PDF. Which is correct?

A: Preferably use the separate pdf, within the stated limit of two pages.

Q: Is it more than 10% for EACH participating company?

A: No. We expect a substantial in-kind contribution overall from the consortium. In other words, the total sum of in-kind or in-cash contributions should be above 2 mNOK if the sum applied for is 20 mNOK.

Q: Are there written updates after the webinar?

A: Yes, as questions and answers in the FAQ

Q: From the webinar it was understood that the proposals NEED to have the whole value chain included, but not necessary all fuels and type of barriers mentioned here. The question is if we shall read AND or OR in yellow marked wordings:

1. *Demonstrate the use of hydrogen, ammonia **and** electrofuels in the wider energy systems. For example; in ports, within transportation and industry.*
2. *Projects should assess technological, safety **and** socio-economical barriers for a hydrogen, ammonia and e-fuel based transition in, for example; harbour operations, including fuelling of vessels and transportation and logistics-related services.*

A: You may read the AND as an OR, but then it is advisable to make a compelling argument to support your choice. There might be specific cases where there are good reasons to limit the scope of the proposal, but please be aware that this can be reflected in the evaluation.

Joint Nordic Hydrogen Research Programme

National regulations:

Denmark	Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD)
Contact person	Jens Peter Vittrup, jens.peter.vittrup@innofond.dk Martin Søndergaard, martin.sondergaard@innofond.dk
Eligible applicants	IFD supports Danish companies and knowledge institutions, including universities, relevant public and private organizations and government-approved research and technology organizations (GTS). A Danish enterprise must be included in the project consortium.
Eligible cost	Max. requested grant €500.000 for all Danish participants in one project and max requested grant €300.000 incl. overhead for one participant. We prefer to have both academia and Danish user-organisations or commercial partners in the application. Funding rates per partner follows the general rules and regulations for international projects.
Type of research funded	In this call IFD funds industrial research as well as experimental development as defined in our [Guidelines for International projects] and COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014
National regulations	General rules and regulations for international projects
Funding available	10 million NOK
Link to further information	www.innovationfund.dk

Norway	Norwegian Research Council (RCN)
Contact person	Åse Slagtern (asl@forskningsrådet.no)
Eligible applicants	Universities, research institutes, private companies, but not single-person companies (enkeltmannsforetak).
Eligible cost	All costs related to research in the form of payroll and indirect expenses, procurement of R&D services, equipment (as a minor part of the project cost) and other operating expenses.
Type of research funded	Industrial research and experimental development
National regulations	According to ESA state aid rules
Funding available	10m NOK
Link to further information	www.rcn.no/en

Sweden	Energimyndigheten
Contact person	Kajsa Paludan (kajsa.paludan@energimyndigheten.se)
Eligible applicants	<p>Support from SEM is available to companies and knowledge institutions, including universities, and government-approved Research and Technology Organizations with a Swedish organisation number.</p> <p>Swedish applicants are also required to complete a separate application at the SEM website in addition to the full consortium application in the NER- application portal.</p> <p>Link to separate SEM application portal: For application</p>
Eligible cost	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. personnel costs of maximum of 825 SEK per hour (no limit for universities) 2. costs for equipment, land and buildings to the extent and during the time they are used for the project 3. costs for consultants 4. licenses with certain limitations 5. other indirect costs 6. overhead of maximum of 30% of other costs (full cost principle applied for universities) <p>Further details (in Swedish) see: Information on funding</p>
Type of research funded	Industrial research and experimental development, as defined in COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 .
National regulations	As a Swedish authority we are bound by the principle of public access in Sweden, which means that the public has the right to request public documents that have been received by or drawn up by the authority
Funding available	10 mNOK
Link to further information	Sök stöd och rapporter (energimyndigheten.se)
National application required	<p>Applicants from Swedish organizations must submit a separate application to the Swedish Energy Agency in addition to the Nordic application.</p> <p>It is essential that applicants address national funding rules in addition to eligibility criteria in the Nordic call.</p>

Finland	Business Finland
Contact person	Tero Ijäs (tero.ijas@businessfinland.fi)
Eligible applicants	See link below
Eligible cost	See link below
Type of research funded	See link below
National regulations	See link below
Funding available	10 mNOK
Link to further information	https://www.businessfinland.fi/suomalaisille-asiakkaille/palvelut/rahoitus/

Iceland	RANNIS (the Icelandic Centre for Research)
Contact person	Sigurður Björnsson, Rannis – sigurdur.bjornsson@rannis.is Lýður Skúli Erlendsson, Rannís – lydur.skuli.erlendsson@rannis.is
Eligible applicants	Both companies and institutions, ref. "Hagnyt rannsoknarverkefni, Reglur og leiðbeiningar til umsækjenda 2020" https://www.rannis.is/media/v20/TS_Reglur-Hagnyt-rannsoknarverkefni_2020.pdf
Eligible cost	Same ref. as above
Type of research funded	Applied research with TRL level 5+. Further information on eligibility in the ref. above
National regulations	Same ref. as above
Funding available	2 mNOK
Link to further information	https://www.rannis.is/sjodir/rannsoknir/taeknithrounarsjodur