

Call for proposals: The Nordic Green Growth Research and Innovation Programme

Application deadline: 16 August 2016 at 10:00 CEST.

Introduction

The Nordic countries have committed themselves to ambitious climate goals towards 2050 in terms of developing energy efficient and low-carbon societies. To achieve these goals, extensive green transitions are needed in all areas of the Nordic societies and economies, facilitated by promoting green economic growth, sustainability and competitiveness in both the public and the private sectors.

The main research and innovation funders in the Nordic countries are now launching the joint Nordic Green Growth Research and Innovation Programme (hereafter “the programme”) in cooperation with NordForsk, Nordic Innovation and Nordic Energy Research.

The programme will cover innovation, research and energy, as well as science and technology. The programme will generate Nordic added value and create synergies with relevant initiatives nationally and at the Nordic level.

The total budget amounts to NOK 73 million.

Funding decision: mid-November 2016. Project start-up: Q1 2017.

Objectives

The programme has two objectives:

- a) To generate knowledge and policy advice about green growth;
- b) To stimulate innovative solutions that can accelerate the transition towards a sustainable society.

The programme will do so by:

- creating sustainable development in the Nordic region;
- reducing the environmental footprint of existing industries;
- increasing the competitiveness of Nordic industries in the growing international markets for clean technologies, products and services;
- generating knowledge and policy advice.

Definitions

GREEN GROWTH

Green growth is defined by OECD as fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies. <http://www.oecd.org/env/towards-green-growth-9789264111318-en.htm>

INNOVATION

Innovation is defined as new products, services, markets, processes or organisational models that create financial benefits or are otherwise of value to society. Innovation takes place in companies and public sector service providers and is important for all industries and sectors. This calls for a broad approach to innovation, which may encompass a number of sources and types of innovation. <http://nordicinnovation.org/en-GB/about-us/about-nordic-innovation/>

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

http://www.unece.org/oes/nutshell/2004-2005/focus_sustainable_development.html

Target group

This call is targeted towards a wide range of organisations within research and industry, including:

- universities, research institutes and other research-performing organisations;
- private and publicly owned companies;
- public sector organisations;
- civil society organisations (including NGOs);
- municipalities and regions.

The involvement of young professionals/researchers and entrepreneurs is especially encouraged.

Thematic areas for research and innovation

The programme encompasses two thematic areas relevant for both research and innovation. Overarching collaborative projects encompassing both research and innovation are encouraged under both thematic areas, with energy as a cross-cutting topic.

THEMATIC AREA I. SOCIETAL CHANGES AND FUTURE SCENARIOS WITH FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Relevant areas for research and innovation projects include:

- analyses of paradigm changes;
- new governance structures;
- institutional and public sector innovation;
- industrial transformations and development of conceptual frameworks to assist policymakers.

THEMATIC AREA II. GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS AND CATALYSING INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION IN NORDIC BUSINESSES TO UTILISE THE ONGOING GREEN SHIFT.

Relevant areas for the innovation and research projects include:

- emerging technologies:
 - export potential and global competitiveness of the Nordic cleantech industry;
 - new processes and products with strong focus on entire value chains;
- efficient production and use of natural resources and energy, including:
 - increased use of waste as a resource;
 - sustainable extraction of non-renewable resources (minerals/fossil);
 - barriers and opportunities for developing Nordic energy systems as a supplier and carrier of renewable energy;

Relevant projects under this thematic area are:

- projects in which pilots/proof-of-concepts/methods/processes/products/services/ knowledge are created in line with the purpose of the project area in question;
- projects that can deliver concrete results for application by the target group(s) and should be ready for implementation by the industry within two years of project completion;
- projects that will entail value creation for Nordic companies/industries/regions or communities;
- projects that have a clear link to the specific sector/field/theme and provide a clear, concrete description of project implementation.

The proposal and assessment process

MODULES

The call consists of two separate modules. Module I is aimed at research-driven projects, while Module II targets industry-driven projects. The thematic areas for research and innovation outlined above may be relevant for both modules.

PROPOSALS

Proposals for projects led by research institutions should be submitted under **Module I** (research-driven projects). There is no formal requirement for co-funding or contributions in-kind in **Module I**, but this is nevertheless highly encouraged. Projects submitted under **Module I** can apply for funding ranging from NOK 10 to 20 million. The eligibility and assessment criteria for **Module I** are presented in the section *Eligibility and assessment criteria **Module I** (research-driven projects)*.

Module II is for industry-driven proposals that aim to develop a close-to-market solution. There is a minimum requirement of 50 per cent co-funding/contributions in-kind. Projects submitted under **Module II** can apply for up to NOK 6 million. The eligibility and assessment criteria for **Module II** are presented in the section *Eligibility and assessment criteria **Module II** (industry-driven projects)*.

Applicants planning to apply under **Module II** may submit a draft project outline to the secretariat. The outline should contain:

- a short and to-the-point project description;
- an explanation of why the project is needed;
- a description of the Nordic added value of the project;
- a description of the project consortium;
- a budget outline.

The [draft project outline template](#) under **Module II** will provide you with further information. Please send the draft to info@nordicinnovation.org by 1 June 2016. Applicants that have submitted a draft will receive brief feedback from the secretariat within 14 days.

Please note that submission of a draft project outline is not mandatory and will not have an impact on the evaluation of the final proposal.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

After submission, the secretariat will assess whether the proposals meet the general eligibility criteria. Only proposals that meet the eligibility criteria will be forwarded to the external assessment panels for review and rating. Based on the rating, the Nordic added value and the overall strategic value of the proposals the Programme Committee will recommend projects for funding.

This recommendation will then form the basis for the final funding decision, to be taken by the TRI Management Board and Nordic Innovation.

General eligibility criteria

To be eligible for funding, the following conditions must be met for both modules:

- The consortium must involve partner institutions/industry from at least three Nordic countries. Entities from non-Nordic countries must fund their own participation.
- The host entity for the project (project manager/project owner) must be based in one of the Nordic countries.
- Proposals must be submitted in English via the NordForsk Application Portal (Module I) or Nordic Innovation Application Portal (Module II).
- The project duration should not exceed three years.
- A budget showing the anticipated total costs of the project, including a specification of the requested funding and own financing/contributions in-kind must be submitted.

Failure to fulfil the basic eligibility criteria will result in an automatic rejection of the proposal.

Eligibility and assessment criteria Module I (research-driven projects)

Additional eligibility criteria for research-driven projects

For Module I, the project leader of the consortium must be a senior researcher at the host institution.

Assessment criteria for research-driven projects

An international evaluation panel will assess the proposals according to the following criteria:

- Scientific excellence, including research and innovation idea and originality;
- Relevance to the call;
- Competence of the project leader and the consortium;
- Research plan (including a specified budget) and feasibility;
- Demonstrated interdisciplinary research (understood as interfaculty research);
- Cross-sectoral involvement (private and/or public sectors and other research and innovation actors), when relevant;
- Expected results and impact of the planned project.

The Programme Committee will assess the Nordic added value and overall strategic value of the proposals.

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

There is no formal requirement for co-funding or contributions in-kind, but this is nevertheless highly encouraged.

Funding may be used for:

- Administrative expenses related to project management;
- PhD and Post-doc positions;
- Travel and mobility;
- Salaries;
- Travel and accommodation for international collaborating partners;
- Communication and dissemination activities.

[Registration for Module I](#)

Eligibility and assessment criteria Module II (industry-driven projects)

Additional eligibility criteria for industry-driven projects

- No more than 50 per cent of the budget can come from public funding (all funding from the public sector, including Nordic Innovation and the EU, is defined as public funding).
- The proposal must culminate in a **concrete result** (new concept, process, product or service) that does not require an additional project to realise the objectives of the proposal.
- The proposal must have strong industry participation and, as a general rule, the project owner should be from industry (the project administrator does not have to represent industry).

Failure to fulfil the eligibility criteria will result in an automatic rejection of the proposal.

Assessment criteria for Module II (industry-driven projects)

An international evaluation panel will assess the proposals according to the criteria below.

The Programme Committee will assess the Nordic added value and overall strategic value of the proposals.

QUALITY (35%)

- Relevance and innovativeness with respect to the description of the project areas, e.g.:
 - How innovative is the proposal?
- Does the project bring forward new value in the form of a new concept, method, process, product, service or knowledge of relevance to the call text?
- Structure and methods, e.g.:
 - A clear project plan and clearly defined goals.
 - Quality of the consortium.
 - Knowledge of the project area in question. Do the project partners represent all the parties necessary for achieving the objectives of the project?

NORDIC ADDED VALUE AND COMMUNICATION OF THE RESULTS (25%)

The proposal must demonstrate Nordic added value and/or Nordic strongholds, e.g.:

- How does the proposal promote Nordic cooperation?
- Does it build on existing synergies between at least three Nordic countries?
- Will the proposal create more value and impact by conducting the project at the Nordic level rather than only at the national level?
- How will the proposal create new knowledge, skills and/or technology within Nordic businesses and industry? Can this new value be replicated to benefit Nordic businesses and industry as a whole?
- How will the project be a showcase for Nordic branding and Nordic added value? How will the consortium communicate the results on an international level? Is the correct target group identified?

A project promotes “Nordic added value” when cross-border cooperation involving private and public organisations generates more value than would be the case through national activities alone.

BUSINESS PLAN (20%)

- Strong growth and export potential as well as a clear prospect of branding Nordic solutions.
- Involvement of the market demander. Is the demander part of the project consortium? Is the applicant a user of the project result?
- Commercialisation.
- Value creation – present and future prospects.
- Exit strategy – will the project be economically sustainable beyond the project period?

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK (20%)

- Total cost of the project:
 - Cost vs. quality. Does the budget reflect the ambitions and quality of the project?
 - Is the project economically viable?
- Co-funding:
 - Are the applicants providing substantial co-funding? A high degree of own investment from applicants will be viewed in a positive light as it demonstrates commitment to the project.

Non-eligible costs under Module II (industry-driven projects)

Costs that are not eligible for funding include:

- costs for organisations and companies that are not based in or do not operate in one or more of the Nordic countries;
- investments in individual companies;
- independent freelance activities;
- writing proposals;
- costs for procurement of equipment (may be approved under special circumstances);
- overtime costs;
- salary increases (compared to the normal company salary);
- indirect taxes and duties, including VAT;
- “return on capital employed”, including dividends and other distributions of profits;
- provisions for possible future losses or charges;
- costs related to any interest;
- provisions for doubtful debts;
- unnecessary or ill-considered expenses;
- marketing, sales and distribution costs for products and services;
- leasing costs (or part thereof) where the leasing arrangement has the effect of unnecessarily increasing the charge made to the project (e.g. where the cost without interest of the leased equipment is higher than if purchased).

The state aid rules in relation to Module II (industry-driven projects)

Support awarded to entities pursuing economic activities is defined as state aid and is thus subject to EU and EEA regulations. The state aid rules apply only to project participants that conduct economic activity. If a project participant does not conduct economic activity, grants may be awarded without further consideration. The application form will prompt you to give adequate consideration to the state aid rules. [Information on state aid rules](#)

Disclaimer for Module II (industry-driven projects)

We reserve the right to vary the form or substance of the call for proposals (including but not limited to, the modules, criteria and other requirements and any deadlines) as we deem appropriate in the circumstances, taking into account the aims of the call.

We will use reasonable efforts to notify all registered participants of any changes. If you object to such changes, you should withdraw from the call for proposals; your continued participation will indicate your acceptance of any changes.

We also reserve the right to suspend or terminate the call for proposals at our sole discretion, if:

- a. the volume and quality of proposals received will not result in adequate projects;
- b. funding for the call for proposals is reduced materially or withdrawn by our partners;
- c. we determine in our reasonable opinion that the call for proposals will no longer achieve its aims or is no longer relevant or useful; or
- d. there are changes or developments outside our control that affect the call for proposals (including but not limited to, changes to the law or in medical, technological or scientific knowledge).

Registration for Module II.

Contacts

For questions related to Module I, please contact:

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For technical support, please contact:

NordForsk: support@nordforsk.org

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Updated information

The call text, application form and updated information may be accessed via the following sites:

www.nordforsk.org

www.nordicinnovation.org

www.nordicenergy.org