

# NCoE "Education for Tomorrow"

## General info

**Final submission date** 06.11.2012 14:00 CET

## Background

NordForsk in collaboration with the Academy of Finland; Swedish Research Council; the Research Council of Norway; the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Iceland; and the Danish Council for Strategic Research is issuing a call for proposals for a Nordic Centre of Excellence in a newly established programme entitled Education for Tomorrow. The programme's main objectives are to strengthen educational research, contribute to a knowledge-based policy for the educational sector through widespread dissemination of the research results.

The Nordic countries and their educational systems share important aims, roots and cultural characteristics. The countries all have a strong tradition of public educational systems from kindergarten to universities and beyond, all the way into life-long learning. The programme aims to enhance the understanding of education and educational systems as well as of formal and informal learning. The programme seeks to explore their roles in tomorrow's society and encourages re-conceptualisation of education and learning.

The purpose of this call for proposals is to finance one Nordic Centre of Excellence.

For more information about the programme, please refer to the Programme Memorandum in the Appendix below or <http://www.nordforsk.org/en/programs/programmer/education-for-tomorrow>

**Who can apply?** The NCoE must have commitment from institutions in at least three Nordic countries, and the Project Leader should be an established senior researcher based in one of the co-funding Nordic countries. The formal applicant must thus be an institution, organisation or other legal entity based in one of the five Nordic countries or three autonomous areas.

## Thematic framework

The Nordic Centre of Excellence in Education for Tomorrow is funded to stimulate the development of Nordic education towards the future of the Nordic educational systems. What are the challenges for our educational systems and how can these challenges be met? How can the educational systems reformulate their aims, practices and structures in order to meet the needs of a fast changing society?

Many aspects of our societies have evolved significantly, they have become more diverse and individualistic, digital, multicultural and global, all of which affect profoundly the preconditions for learning. The increased demand for diverse competence building, accompanied by constant reassessments of social and moral value systems occur in a variety of both traditional and new arenas and in diverse contexts. What are the premises for teaching and learning in the future; for education and the welfare state; for internationalisation and governance of the educational systems and for inclusion and equal access? What might be the Nordic responses as education becomes increasingly global and rapidly moves into the 21st century?

This call for proposals for a Nordic Centre of Excellence is for joint research initiatives within the field of education. It is meant to stimulate research groups that investigate the future educational systems from various disciplines, asking questions and using research methods in novel ways.

The funded activities should support genuine Nordic cooperation and multi-level analyses of the educational systems. Gender, ethnicity, regional differences and social class or cultural aspects of working life are important aspects of the programme. The NCoE is expected to produce a substantial international contribution.

## What is a Nordic Centre of Excellence (NCoE)?

The NCoE is a main NordForsk funding instrument established to strengthen cooperation between outstanding researchers, research groups and research institutions within areas of priority for the Nordic countries. NCoEs add value to research performed in the countries and increase the international impact of Nordic research.

An NCoE is a multi-site or single-site research environment with a common research agenda, joint management and budget, and joint communication and outreach activities providing a coherent view of the centre. An NCoE facilitates more efficient use of resources by gathering people and funding into a collaborative entity. It stimulates international researcher mobility, true interdisciplinary research, and joint use and establishment of research infrastructure. An NCoE contributes to the attractiveness of the Nordic region and strengthen linkages to and impact on relevant European research initiatives by providing an international strategy and through providing joint access to the best research environments. Through coordination of researcher education an NCoE builds competence and long-lasting networks of younger researchers and promotes their career opportunities, and through joint communication and dissemination as well as coordinated data management, the possibilities to use research results are improved both in the scientific communities and in society as a whole. The dissemination plan should include a plan for knowledge sharing and knowledge exchange.

NCoE status and funding is granted for five years. This period should be used to create favourable conditions for continued cooperation beyond the end of the NCoE project.

For more information about the NCoE concept, please refer to the Appendix below or <http://www.nordforsk.org/en/funding/finansieringsformer/nordic-centre-of-excellence>

## Financial framework

The call for proposals is funded through a common pot provided by the funding partners (Nordic Council of Ministers; NordForsk; the Academy of Finland; the Research Council of Norway; the Swedish Research Council; the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Iceland; and the Danish Council for Strategic Research) and administered by NordForsk. The total budget for this call for proposals is up to 25 MNOK with the intention to establish one Nordic Centre of Excellence. The NCoE funding is granted for five years.

Funding is granted for Nordic research collaboration, as specified in the proposal. The NCoE funding can also be used for collaboration with non-Nordic researchers and research groups. To fulfil its goals, the NCoE can also include non-Nordic nodes funded using other contributions (cash or in-kind) as specified in the proposed budget.

In order to support cross-border mobility, new positions within an NCoE should be announced internationally in open competition.

## Processing of proposals

Proposals should be submitted electronically through NordForsk Application Portal (<https://funding.nordforsk.org/nordforsk>) no later than 6 November 2012 14:00 CET. Proposals must be submitted in English. No attachments are allowed, unless specifically requested in the application form. The application form is based on the eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria stated below, and can be found in its complete form at NordForsk Application Portal. In order to access the application form you must register as a user at NordForsk Application Portal and create an application draft.

### Eligibility criteria

- The NCoE Project Leader must be an established senior researcher based at a research institution in a Nordic country (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) or autonomous area (Aaland Islands, Faroe Islands, Greenland). The institution will enter into a contract with NordForsk and will be responsible for the administration of the NCoE. This is also the institution to which NordForsk will transfer the grant
- The NCoE must have institutional commitment from at least three Nordic countries (including autonomous areas). Letters of Intent are required from all NCoE partners
- Proposals should contain a total budget of expected costs for the NCoE and a specification of how these costs are covered by different sources, including funding sought from NordForsk
- All NCoE partners must document their own contribution (cash and in-kind) to the centre
- The proposed duration of the NCoE is five years
- Proposals have to include an ethical statement
- Proposals have to include a description of gender aspects of the research and organisation of the NCoE

### Evaluation criteria

All proposals have to be relevant to the call, of excellent scientific quality, and outline how added value will be created through the cooperation. The quality of the proposed Nordic Centre of Excellence is measured according to the following three components:

- Excellence of Research Plan (relevance to the contents of the call; scientific quality; originality and novelty of research; feasibility and expected results; appropriateness of budget; potential for knowledge transfer and use of knowledge to other areas; contribution to open science; potential for long-term cooperation beyond the funding period)
- Excellence of People (scientific merits; leadership; experience and skills related to management and operation)
- Excellence of Environment (inclusion of relevant environments; cohesion; possibilities for specialization; economy of scale; international strategy and profile; demonstrated skills and plans for researcher training; organisation of the centre of excellence; access to relevant infrastructure)

The evaluation of the research plan has more weight than the other two components. Note that the evaluation of the research plan includes an evaluation of the feasibility of the proposed budget describing the total costs and overall funding contributions for the NCoE, including the impact of the funding requested from NordForsk.

The funding decisions will be made by the NordForsk Board in March 2013 based on external peer review performed by a panel consisting of external international experts followed by a recommendation from the Steering Committee of the programme Education for Tomorrow. NordForsk's Guidelines on Impartiality will be applied in order to avoid conflicts of interest in the prioritisation and funding decisions. The evaluation panel will provide written feedback to the applicants via NordForsk. The funding decisions will be communicated to the applicants, and NordForsk will initiate contract negotiations with the granted NCoE and its host organisation shortly thereafter. The granted NCoE is expected to start its activities by summer 2013.

## Management and organisation

NordForsk signs a contract with the hosting institution for the NCoE where exact funding rates and details are agreed. The grant is transferred to this institution and a consortium agreement regulates the relations between the institutions involved in the centre. NordForsk administers the funding. NordForsk has an active secretariat role managing and further developing the programme under the governance of the programme's Steering Committee.

Performance of the NCoE is monitored through annual progress reports comprising a scientific progress report and a financial report. After three years of operation, a midterm evaluation is performed and a more comprehensive progress report is assessed, before granting the centre the last two years of funding. A final evaluation of the results and impact of the NCoE is conducted after the end of the funding period.

In order to facilitate the best scientific progress, an NCoE should receive regular and structured scientific advice from internationally renowned non-Nordic scientists in their field of research. The Nordic Centre of Excellence will be supported by a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) which supports the Steering committee and the NCoE. In order to ensure the coherence of the programme, the SAB will be appointed for the entire programme.

## Open access to project results: Publications, data, software and educational resources

A publication plan is required if data production, software development (preferably open source) or development of educational resources represent a significant part of the project. The purpose of this is to ensure future reuse of project outputs for the wider Nordic and international community. Project results should be published and made available through relevant national and/ or international organisations or on suitable web sites in accordance with adequate open access rules.

A data management plan describes how research data will be collected, how the data will be used and stored during the research project, and how its reuse will be enabled and long-term preservation ensured after the original research is completed. A data management plan helps to safeguard sensitive data and facilitate long-term storage in data-archives in e.g. existing national archives.

A detailed data management plan should give answers to at least the following questions:

- What kind of data will be collected?
- How will the data be collected?
- Who holds the copyright and intellectual property rights of the data?
- What kind of possession issues are involved?
- Who will decide on access to the data?
- How will the research participants be informed?
- Which software will be used in storing and processing the data?
- How will the (technical) quality of the data be assured?
- Which data formats and storage media will be used?
- What kind of rights will be granted to different user groups for reading and managing data files?
- What kind of data and file backup procedures will be used?
- How will data processing be documented?
- How will the metadata on the data collection and dataset content be stored?
- How will confidentiality be ensured?
- How will data protection be carried out?
- What will happen to the data after the original research is completed?

In addition, the research data management plan should contain:

- Include in the application a budget for data publication and management. Justify the budget information regarding direct costs for data publication and management
- Contact person. Indicate the contact person and contact information regarding the data

Below are two concrete examples on how a succinct data management plan, appended to the research plan, can be structured. The data management plan can also be more detailed.

### Data Management Plan for Quantitative Data (Mail Survey)

New empirical data will be collected in the project. The data will be collected through a mail survey. Data processing, creation of backups, and data protection will be systematically taken care of. A data matrix based on survey responses will be archived at a data archive after the completion of the project. In the survey cover letter, the research participants will be informed that the information related to their names and addresses will be removed from the data and that the digital survey data will be archived for research and teaching purposes. The possibilities for continued use of the data will be ensured by carefully documenting the data collection methods as well as the contents of the dataset.

### Data Management Plan for Qualitative Data (Theme Interviews)

New empirical data will be collected in the project. The data will be collected through interviews. Data processing, creation of backups, and data protection will be systematically taken care of. The audio recordings of interviews will be transcribed into text files, which will be archived at a data archive for research and teaching purposes after the completion of the project. The respondents will be informed about archiving. The recorded interviews will be destroyed after the original research is completed. Information that allows the identification of the research participants will be removed from the archived text files. The possibilities for continued use of the data will be ensured by carefully documenting the data collection methods as well as the contents of the dataset, and by complementing the transcribed text files with basic information about the interview.

Open access as described above is strongly encouraged and applicants would need strong arguments for exceptions.

#### References:

<http://www.fsd.uta.fi>  
<http://snd.gu.se/sv/start>

**Max applied amount** 25 MNOK

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