

NCoE "Nordic Societal Security"

General info

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Background

The Nordic countries have cooperated closely in the area of societal security for decades. In recent years, this tradition of practical and problem-focused cooperation across national borders to ensure the safety and security of the countries' inhabitants has been strengthened through several political initiatives (e.g., Nordic Declaration at Haga in 2009 and the 2011 Nordic Declaration of Solidarity). NordForsk assigned an expert group the task of exploring the prospects for Nordic research cooperation in the field of societal security. Based on the recommendations from that group, the Nordic Societal Security Programme was established by NordForsk and national funding agencies in the Nordic countries.

The Programme Committee that governs the Nordic Societal Security Programme has decided to establish one or more Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoE) for research on societal security.

A call for proposals focusing on preparatory work for establishing an NCoE was issued on 15 April 2013 with an application deadline of 14 June 2013. In this first step, 5 preparatory projects/networks were funded. The present NCoE call is open to participation from all relevant Nordic research environments, regardless of participation in the non-mandatory call for preparatory work.

For more information on the Nordic Societal Security Programme, see [NordForsk Policy Paper on Societal Security in the Nordic Countries](#)

Who can apply?

The NCoE on societal security 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 countries funding the Nordic Societal Security Programme: Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The formal applicant must thus be an institution, organisation or other legal entity based in one of these countries. A project leader of an NCoE proposal to this call cannot appear as project leader or team leader in another NCoE proposal to this call.

Thematic framework

This call aims to:

- Address common Nordic societal security issues.
- Mobilise and qualify researchers for participation in EU Security research in Horizon 2020.

Due to increasing complexity and globalisation, new challenges are emerging regarding societal security issues. Research on societal security has developed differently in the Nordic countries.

Societal security comprises the ability of a society to sustain vital societal functions and secure populations' life, health, needs and basic values under extraordinary stresses, known as crises.

The proposal for a Nordic Centre of Excellence should address one or, preferably, more issues related to the following aspects of societal security:

- Prevention
- Capacity-building for response and recovery
- Communication
- Learning

The applications should employ a multidisciplinary approach and focus on cross-sectoral and transboundary issues and consequences for the Nordic countries, of generic significance for societal security. Topics can be examined in various empirical domains, to which expert knowledge and contextual aspects may be added. Traditional but still important domains include the societal effects of the vulnerabilities in interdependent critical infrastructures and critical societal functions. Examinations of new stressors to these systems and functions may be appropriate for a resilience management approach.

The Nordic Centre of Excellence should have the potential to address the challenges of managing the unexpected and the unknown. The difficult but increasingly widely embraced concept of 'resilience' may capture the essence of what is required to meet the grand challenges relating to societal security in the future. Research is needed on the various components of the concept of resilience in a human, socio-technical, societal, organisational, political and transnational context.

A working definition of resilience that fits the present thematic focus is: Resilience is the capability of a social system (e.g. an organisation, city, or society) to proactively adapt to and recover from both expected and unexpected disturbances. Researchers are encouraged to seek to deconstruct the concept in order to identify more specific areas for scientific inquiry. Such analytical activities would help to underpin and give direction to research in the field, which is often mission-oriented and applied.

In addition to conducting research of high scientific quality, the centres should establish enduring working relationships with different types of end-users in the field of societal security.

The thematic framework guiding this call for proposals is described in further detail in the [NordForsk Policy Paper on Societal Security in the Nordic Countries](#), chapter 3. All applicants are strongly encouraged to read the policy paper thoroughly.

What is a Nordic Centre of Excellence (NCoE)?

Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoE) are 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.

A Nordic Centre of Excellence facilitates more efficient use of resources by gathering people, funding and infrastructure into collaborative entities, thus enabling better coordination of research efforts. It stimulates international researcher mobility, true interdisciplinary research, and joint use and establishment of research infrastructure. Through its international strategy and by providing joint access to the best research environments in the Nordic region, a Nordic Centre of Excellence contributes to the attractiveness of the region and strengthens the linkages to and impact on relevant European research initiatives. Through coordination of researcher education, it builds competence and long-lasting networks of younger researchers and enhances their career opportunities. **The applicants are strongly encouraged to read the NCoE concept document thoroughly, available [here](#)**

Applications should demonstrate how the proposed NCoE will facilitate and develop cooperation with non-Nordic research groups within societal security.

Financial framework

The call for proposals is funded through a common pot provided by the funding partners of the Nordic Societal Security Programme, which currently are: NordForsk, Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (Norway), Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (Sweden), Icelandic Centre for Research (Iceland), Academy of Finland (Finland). The call is administered by NordForsk. NCoE status and funding will be granted for a period of five years.

Funding will be granted for Nordic research collaboration as specified in the proposal. The funding can be used to fund researchers and research groups at academic institutions and research institutes in the Nordic countries and the autonomous areas. The funding can also be used for visits to the Nordic node(s) by non-Nordic researchers and for visits to non-Nordic research environments by Nordic researchers. To fulfil its goals, an NCoE on societal security should also include participation of non-Nordic nodes funded by other sources (direct funds or in kind) and specified in the proposed budget.

The Project Manager shall be responsible for and support the implementation of human resource strategies for researchers in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code for the Recruitment of Researchers.

In order to support cross-border mobility, any new positions within the Nordic Centre of Excellence shall be announced internationally in open competition and according to transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures, in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Vacancies for first-stage, recognised, established and leading researchers shall as far as possible be advertised on the EURAXESS Jobs portal.

Processing of proposals

Proposals should be submitted electronically through [NordForsk Application Portal](#) no later than 15 January 2014 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:

To be eligible for NCoE funding from the Nordic Societal Security Programme, the following conditions must be met:

- The NCoE Project Leader must be an established senior researcher based at a research institution in a country co-funding the Nordic Societal Security Programme. 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.
- Researchers and research groups must be based at institutions of higher education, e.g., universities and other research institutions, or at public or private enterprises or other organisations with a strong research focus.
- The NCoE must have binding institutional commitment from at least three Nordic countries. Nordic is defined as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the autonomous areas, Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland Islands. Letters of Intent are required from all NCoE partners.
- Proposals must include an overall budget detailing the expected costs for the NCoE and a specification of how these costs will be distributed among the different funding sources, including funding sought from NordForsk.
- All NCoE partners must document their own contribution (cash and in-kind) to the centre.
- The proposed time frame for an NCoE is five years.
- Proposals must include a description of the relevant legal and ethical frameworks and procedures needed to perform the research.
- In compliance with NordForsk's gender policy, all proposals must provide a description of gender balance in the project consortium, as well as gender perspectives in the proposed research.
- Proposals must include plan for contributing to open science in accordance with Science Europe's Principles for the Transition to Open Access to Research Publications.

Evaluation criteria:

The quality of the proposed NCoE will be assessed in relation to the following three components:

- Relevance relative to the call for proposals.
- Excellence of research plan (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, 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, possibility for specialisation, economy of scale, international strategy and profile, demonstrated skills and plans for researcher training, organisation of the Nordic Centre of Excellence).

The evaluation of the research plan will be weighted more heavily than the other 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 to the NCoE, including the impact of the funding requested from NordForsk.

The final funding decision will be taken by the NordForsk Board based on external peer review and the subsequent recommendation of the Programme Committee. NordForsk's Guidelines on Impartiality will be applied in order to avoid conflicts of interest in the prioritisation and funding decisions. Written feedback from the evaluation will be provided to the applicants via NordForsk. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the funding decision, and NordForsk will initiate contract negotiations with the approved NCoEs and their host organisations shortly thereafter. The NCoEs are expected to launch their activities during autumn 2014.

Management and organisation

NordForsk will sign a contract with the hosting institution for the NCoE in which the exact funding rates and details are stated. The grant will be transferred to this institution and a consortium agreement regulates the relations between the institutions involved in the centre. NordForsk administers the funding, manage and further develop the programme in collaboration with the Societal Security Programme Committee. Performance of the NCoE will be monitored through annual progress reports comprising a scientific progress report and a financial report. After three years of operation, a midterm evaluation will be performed and a more comprehensive progress report will be assessed, before granting the centre the last two years of funding. A final evaluation of the results and impact of the Societal Security Programme will be conducted after the end of the funding period.

In order to facilitate the best scientific progress, the NCoE should receive regular and structured scientific advice from internationally renowned non-Nordic scientists in its field of research. NordForsk will therefore appoint a Scientific Advisory Board for the NCoE.

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

Max applied amount 25MNOK

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