



# NordForsk Open Invitation

**NordForsk shall facilitate effective and trustful research cooperation in the Nordic Region, and ensure that NordForsk funded research has the highest international quality and realises Nordic added value.**

NordForsk may fund high quality research, research infrastructure and research-based innovation in different sectors of society and select projects for funding based on scientific quality and expected Nordic added value.

The Open Invitation mechanism is NordForsk's main mechanism for the development of NordForsk research programmes:

Open Invitation is an opportunity for the national research funding organisations\* to take an active part in setting the NordForsk research agenda. The national research funding organisations are invited to propose new Nordic programmes, or extension of existing NordForsk programmes. At least 2/3 of the programme budget should be provided by external organisations from at least three Nordic countries. NordForsk will then co-fund the programme with up to 1/3 of the total budget. The joint Nordic programmes will be administered by NordForsk, however the national research funding organisations will be involved in the financial decisions and the planning of the programmes through participation in the Programme Committees.

## About NordForsk

NordForsk is an institution under the Nordic Council of Ministers that facilitates and provides funding for Nordic research cooperation and research infrastructure. NordForsk's key stakeholders comprise the national research councils, universities and other research-funding bodies. Together with stakeholders NordForsk works to identify common Nordic priorities and provides funding for research and research infrastructure. NordForsk has a Board with full responsibility, that consists of five members from the national research funding organisations and one from the Association of Nordic University Rectors Conferences (NUS). In addition, there are observers representing the funding organisations in The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

## A mechanism for establishment of new NordForsk initiatives

The NordForsk Board aims to develop NordForsk in a manner that secures close ownership and involvement of the key stakeholders – especially the national research funding organisations.

In light of this, NordForsk has established a mechanism to ensure a simple and flexible way of establishing new programmes and initiatives: the NordForsk Open Invitation. The mechanism should mobilise and stimulate the national research funding organisations to make use of NordForsk funding and the NordForsk administration. NordForsk's ambition for the mechanism is to encourage and enable the national research funding organisations to set the NordForsk research agenda by working together to develop common expressions of interests, thereby ensuring the involvement of the national research funding organisations in developing new initiatives as described in the NordForsk statutes: "NordForsk ska främst utforma initiativen utifrån de nationella forskningsfinansierande organens prioriteringar" (NordForsk Statutes, paragraph 2.1). For the national research funding organisations, the Open Invitation provides an effective way of contributing to Nordic added value, increasing the value of their funding by up to 50 percent, reducing their own administrative costs, and supporting international research cooperation.



## NordForsk Open Invitation

Through the Invitation, NordForsk calls on the national research funding organisations to submit expressions of interest to establish new initiatives in fields where they see a common basis for Nordic research funding cooperation. For an expression of interest to be a candidate for a new programme or initiative, certain minimum requirements must be met:

- The initiative can be either research collaboration or research infrastructure collaboration and must be supported with funding by a minimum of three national research funding organisations from three Nordic countries, or two Nordic countries plus either Greenland, The Faroe Islands, or Åland; or two Nordic countries plus a non-Nordic country.
- The NordForsk share of the proposed total budget and the total spending of the programme may vary from 0 – 1/3, based on strategic priorities and the budgetary situation.
- The funding model, the financial scope, and timeline of the programme, is determined by NordForsk in collaboration with the national research funding organisations.
- The contribution from the funders must be at least 20 mill NOK before a new programme or activity can be adopted by NordForsk.
- An expression of interest does not need to include a formal funding commitment from the national research funding organisations, but funding possibilities must be realistic. The payments of the national contributions may be adjusted to suit the national organisations' budget timelines.
- A description of the scope of the initiative, including a clear case for Nordic added value, and, where appropriate, relevance for existing NordForsk activities, must be included. The description must outline how the initiative complements ongoing national and international initiatives.

The expressions of interest could either be on a completely new theme, or an extension of an existing NordForsk programme or initiative, and will be examined by NordForsk secretariat and presented to the NordForsk Board for funding decision. The decision should be based on the criteria above. In dialogue with the national research funding organisations, the NordForsk Board decides how the initiative should be organised in NordForsk.

The NordForsk secretariat and Board will, at the request of any of the Nordic national research funding organisations assist in any way possible in the development of expressions of interests. This includes, for example, acting as a "broker" and facilitate contact between relevant contact persons in the various organisations, organising meetings at the request of the organisations, organise and host seminars/workshops/conferences on particular themes should this be needed, and commissioning feasibility studies or the like on behalf of the organisations. National research funding organisations that would like to pursue an idea for a Nordic programme may in any case, as a first step, contact the NordForsk secretariat for advice on how to proceed.

Once an expression of interest evolves into a new programme, this programme would, as other NordForsk programmes, be administrated by NordForsk, and funding of research will be subject to rigorous peer-review process in line with international best practice. NordForsk funding will cover a substantial part of the administrative costs, thus providing a cost-efficient solution for the national research councils. The NordForsk Board will appoint a Programme Committee based on nominations from the national research funding organisations, as per existing practice.



The NordForsk Board will each year allocate a budget for Open Invitation and invite the national research funding organisations to submit expressions of interests. The expressions of interest could be either for a single, large initiative or several smaller ones. NordForsk will have deadlines for submissions four times per year, in advance of NordForsk Board meetings.

Projects that are funded in a NordForsk programme may have research performing organisations, public sector, private sector and third sector participants, pending on the purpose and objectives of the programme and project. All projects funded by a NordForsk programme must have a research performing organisation\*\* as the project owner and main applicant.

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\*The primary addressees of the Open Invitation mechanism are the national research funding organisations in the Nordic countries:

<https://www.nordforsk.org/en/policy/norden/forskningsradene-i-norden-en>

Other research funding organisations, private or public, may be involved in Open Invitation initiatives in collaboration with primary addresses.

\*\*A research performing organisation is a legal entity which is a university, university college or a research institute, and is characterised by the following:

A primary goal to independently conduct fundamental research and/or applied research and or research-based innovation where results are published.

The entity may be private or public but must not pay out dividends from its activities.

The entity must have significant production of academic, published research.