

POSTDOCTORAL
FELLOWSHIPS AT
UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD -
MATHEMATICS,
PHYSICS AND LIFE
SCIENCE DIVISION -
2024

Information and guidelines for
applicants

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Information about the call

Award amount
Up to DKK 4 million per grant

Application form opens:
7 November 2023

Application deadline:
29 January 2024 at 2 pm (CET)

Applicant notification:
May 2024

Earliest start date:
1 October 2024

Latest start date:
30 September 2025

Review committee:
NNF Committee on Interdisciplinary Research,
and Committee at University of Oxford

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1 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS AT UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD-MPLS

Please read these guidelines carefully before initiating the application process, as they contain the complete call text as well as instructions regarding the completion of the application:

- **Section 1** describes the overall frame and conditions of the call, eligibility criteria and evaluation process.
- **Section 2** provides technical guidance for how to access and navigate in the application and grant management system NORMA.
- **Section 3** gives essential information regarding the requirements to content, structure, and budget of the application.

Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) will treat all applicant and application information confidentially. Read more about how NNF processes personal data under 'privacy & security' in the online application system, NORMA. Furthermore, please read 'General Terms and Conditions' for grants from NNF that all Grant Recipients must comply with:

<http://www.novonordiskfonden.dk/en/content/conditions-grants>

1.1 PURPOSE

The fellowship offers an opportunity for promising young, enthusiastic researchers to carry out a research project in which about three years are dedicated to work at [University of Oxford](#) at the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division followed by about one year at a Danish university or other public or non-profit research institution.

University of Oxford is one of the world's leading universities in science and technology, with a strong tradition in education, cutting-edge research, and innovation. NNF wishes to fuel the career development of excellent early-stage researchers:

- By giving the awardee the opportunity to obtain research experience, training, and knowledge in a unique interdisciplinary environment at the highest international level, while also openly exchanging intellect and ideas with peers at University of Oxford.
- Through mobility, extending the awardee's scientific networks and innovative spirit, and foster scientific independence.
- By associating the awardee to a Danish research institution throughout the project, thereby facilitating the return of the awardee from University of Oxford, and his/her continued research career in the Danish research environment.

NNF postdoctoral fellows will be appointed by University of Oxford as a 'visiting postdoctoral fellow'.

To exploit on and accelerate translation of potential discoveries created during the project period, the fellow can apply to NNF for a Proof-of-Concept grant over a maximum period of 12 months. This opportunity will be available to the awardee after the grant has started and can first be initiated during the return phase to the Danish host institution.

1.2 AREAS OF SUPPORT

The research supported in the programme can range from basic research to innovation. It is possible to apply within all research fields covered by natural and technical sciences or biotechnology, under the condition that the project is of interdisciplinary nature with potential applications in human health or sustainability. The project's potential applications in human health or sustainability must be explained in the application.

The project must be hosted by a principal investigator (PI) affiliated with the MPLS division at University of Oxford.

1.3 ELIGIBILITY

The fellowship supports postdoctoral research projects with a duration of 3-4 years. A minimum of 30 months must be dedicated to researching at University of Oxford. The final months, at least 6 months in case of a 3-year grant and at least 10 months in case of a 4-year grant, are dedicated to the return phase at the Danish host institution. The remaining grant period of up to 8 months can be distributed at any time during the grant period either at University of Oxford or the Danish host institution. **Note: The applicant must plan how the 8 months are distributed in agreement with the host PI at University of Oxford prior to submitting the application.**

A Danish university or other public, non-profit research institution in Denmark must employ the applicant for the entire fellowship period and this institution must administer the fellowship grant.

The successful applicant:

- will have obtained a PhD degree within 5 years of the fellowship start date. **Note: Periods with leave of absence should be excluded from the 5 years.**
- will have a solid education in natural and technical sciences, biomedicine, or biotechnology and a deep interest for interdisciplinary research.
- can apply as a PhD student if the PhD supervisor signs a declaration stating that the applicant is expected to graduate before the start date of the fellowship.
- has established contact with a faculty member at University of Oxford, who has committed to being the primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship.
- has a significant association to the Danish educational system or research environment, e.g., by having graduated from a Danish University or by having several years of research experience at a Danish institution and a clear intention of returning to Denmark after the stay abroad.

IMPORTANT: *Although you are formally employed at a research institution in Denmark and therefore are entitled to Danish employee benefits while at University of Oxford, for instance a certain amount of annual vacation, it is strongly advisable that such benefits are discussed and agreed with the host Department at University of Oxford.*

Special rules for applications:

- a) An applicant can only submit one application for one of the NNF's postdoctoral fellowship grants and cannot submit a new application to the NNF while the application is under review. If the applicant receives a rejection from NNF for the submitted application, the applicant may again apply for another grant.

- b) NNF does not allow double funding of project-specific expenses. If an applicant has applied for, or has received, funding for the project or parts of the project from others, this must be detailed in the budget of the application. If the applicant receives funding for the project or parts of the project from other sources following submission of the NNF application, NNF should be contacted immediately.
- c) The project applied for can be partially funded by other mechanisms, but such co-funding must be clearly stated in the application.
- d) The general conditions that apply when receiving a grant from the NNF can be found on our [webpage](#).

1.4 FUNDING

The duration of the fellowship is a minimum of 3 years and up to 4 years. NNF will award approx. DKK 1 million per year, for a total of up to DKK 4 million per fellowship (*pro rata*).

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses (see section 3.4 for details):

- Salary for the applicant
- Operating expenses
- Equipment
- Conference participation
- Publication costs
- Travel
- Relocation expenses and expenses related to living abroad
- Bench fee
- Direct administrative expenses

NNF will not award funding for overhead.

Please note, that the funds will be given by NNF to the Danish host institution to administrate for the entire duration of the fellowship.

1.5 LANGUAGE

The application and any additional uploads must be written in English.

1.6 APPLICATION PROCESS

Before applying.

The applicant must personally establish contact with an **PI affiliated the MPLS Division at University of Oxford** who will be the applicant's primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship. This will ensure placement in a lab at University of Oxford where the project will be carried out should the applicant be selected. It is encouraged that the applicant works closely with the PI at University of Oxford on the research proposal in the application and bring his/her own expertise and experience to the proposal process. It is also encouraged to consider potential other faculty members at University of Oxford who could be co-mentor(s) on the interdisciplinary research conducted during the period at University of Oxford.

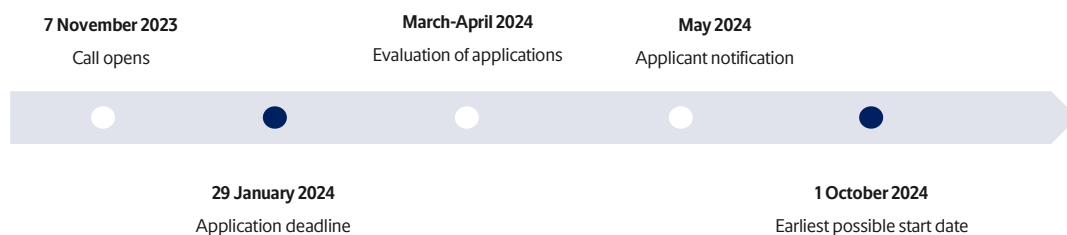
University of Oxford is happy to guide you during this application process and help identify suitable research groups. We encourage applicants to contact the MPLS divisional office, University of Oxford (research@mpls.ox.ac.uk) if you have any questions. Please visit relevant MPLS department websites to help you identify suitable research groups (<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/departments>).

Application and evaluation processes

The application must be completed and submitted using NNF's online application and grant management system, NORMA.

Further information on how to access and navigate in NORMA can be found in chapter 2 and information about the required application content can be found in chapter 3. **Please read Chapter 3 for detailed information on expected format of the application, budget, and required uploaded documentation.**

The proposals are first evaluated by the [NNF Committee on Interdisciplinary Research](#). Up to 4 proposals are selected to be sent for evaluation by a committee at University of Oxford. As a part of their final evaluation, the committee at University of Oxford may carry out online interviews with the selected candidates.



When all applications have been assessed, applicants will be notified whether they have been awarded a grant. The notification e-mail will be sent from noreply@norma.novonordiskfonden.dk to the e-mail address entered on initial registration.

1.7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

NNF's Committee on Interdisciplinary Research will primarily assess the applications based on the following criteria:

- The creativity, novelty, innovation potential, and ambition of the proposed research project
- The scientific excellence and personal drive of the applicant
- The appropriateness and involvement of the host research group at University of Oxford
- Letters of recommendation

2 THE APPLICATION AND GRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – NORMA

Sections 2 and 3 provide guidance on completing and submitting an application through NNF's online application and grant management system NORMA. Section 2 contains general technical information, while section 3 contains information specific to the individual call. All the fields of the application form must be completed in accordance with these guidelines and the instructions in NORMA.

2.1 USER REGISTRATION

NORMA can be accessed through links on NNF's website or directly at: <https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk>

Before you begin, please read the instructions on the login page.

If you do not have a user profile in NORMA, you can register by clicking REGISTER from the login-page. Here you can also retrieve forgotten passwords by clicking the FORGOT PASSWORD-link. The main applicant should only have one user profile. Please use a permanent e-mail that you still have access to after your current position ends and remember to provide a phone number. After registration, you will receive an e-mail with your username and a temporary password, which you can then use to log in to NORMA. After logging in for the first time you will be asked to provide a password of your own choosing.



An applicant cannot change the e-mail address provided at registration. Please contact NORMA Support if you need to change your e-mail address.

A registered user who submits an application is legally responsible for the truthfulness of the content of the application.

If you experience technical problems, please contact NORMA Support: norma-support@novo.dk.

2.2 CREATING AN APPLICATION

Initiate an application by finding the call you wish to apply for in the OPEN CALLS-section on the Applicant Portal in NORMA. Use the search filters at the top of the section to filter by, e.g., overall funding area, and initiate an application by clicking APPLY NOW next to the relevant call.

Applications can be edited up until the deadline. A draft application can be saved by clicking SAVE DRAFT and may be cancelled at any time up until the deadline by clicking CANCEL.

APPLICATION. An application is not submitted to NNF until an applicant has clicked SUBMIT and has received confirmation that the application has been successfully submitted.

You can review the application at any time by reopening from within NORMA. Opening the application will also allow you to download the application in its entirety as a PDF. Make sure the PDF is readable and formatted appropriately before submitting your application.

2.3 TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

For all applications, the individual fields must be completed in accordance with these guidelines and the instructions supplied in NORMA.



To prevent loss of data, it is essential to press SAVE DRAFT before you leave NORMA or navigate in the system.

TEXT FIELDS

Text from Microsoft Word or comparable word processors can be copied and pasted into most text fields of the application. It is, however, important to check that formatting, special characters, and symbols have not been converted or lost in the text fields after copying and pasting. If the formatting looks wrong in NORMA or in the PDF, try changing all text to *Normal* using the FORMAT dropdown. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the pdf looks correct before submitting.

The available options for formatting text are at the top of the text fields. Some shorter text fields do not have the option to use rich text formatting.



For readability purposes, standard fonts, font size 11-12, and line spacing between 1.0 and 1.5 must be used.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations such as figures, charts, tables, images, etc. related to the project description can be uploaded under PROPOSAL. A Maximum of four illustrations are allowed. The illustrations will be placed on a separate page in the application PDF but can be referenced throughout the project proposal as needed. For readability, please name the files numerically by the order in which they are referenced.

The following file formats for illustrations are accepted in the system: JPG, JPEG, PNG, and BMP. The maximum accepted size for each illustration is 1050*1650 pixels.

2.4 SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

The application in its entirety must be submitted electronically via the application system by clicking SUBMIT. It is not possible to submit an application or any part of it by standard mail or e-mail. Any material submitted outside the application system will not be included in the evaluation and will not be returned.



Please remember to check that the PDF version of the application is legible and contains all data and uploads before submitting.

All applicants must read and accept NNF's [Standards for Good Research Practice](#) before submitting the application. Further, the applicant must declare that the information provided in the application is true and accurate.

An application cannot be submitted unless all the required fields have been completed. Applications can be cancelled at any time before submission. If you need to withdraw an application after the deadline, please get in touch with NNF via e-mail, using the contact information on page 3.



A list of any incorrect or incomplete entries will be generated at the top of the screen when you click SUBMIT. Clicking one of these error messages will take you to the relevant field. Amending incorrect or incomplete entries can be time-consuming, so we recommend submitting applications well before the deadline.

3 APPLICATION CONTENT

This section provides guidelines on the content required in the sections of the online application form for this call, and best practice of how to apply for this specific call.

3.1 APPLICANT

The applicant tab contains various sections with information about the main applicant:

- Personal information
- Educational information
- Current institution
- Experience
- Previous and Current Grants from NNF

MAIN APPLICANT

CV: Can be a maximum of 4,000 characters. Please include in your CV a short bibliographic overview summarizing total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first authorships, number of corresponding authorships, and number of citations.

Publication list: Can be a maximum of 5,000 characters. Include a link to an updated profile with a full publication list for the applicant on either Google Scholar, Web of Science, or Scopus. State up to 10 of your most relevant publications for evaluating your merits. Include a complete specification of all authors for each publication with your own name highlighted.

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT GRANTS FROM NNF

If you have previously submitted other applications in the same calendar year, summarize how these applications are related to the current application.

If you have received any grants from NNF as an applicant or a co-applicant within the past five years, you must provide the application number, project title, grant period (in years), grant amount and the percentage share of the grant (100% if there is no co-applicant). Briefly summarize how the grants are related to the current application.

3.2 INSTITUTION

Please provide information about the Danish institution where the grant will be administered. This institution is where you will be employed during the grant period and the institution which will be responsible for budgeting, accounting, and staff supported by the grant.

3.3 PROPOSAL

Describe the project using the following fields on the PROPOSAL tab:

PROJECT TITLE

Use the format 'Oxford - project title' (maximum 150 characters, including spaces).

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief stand-alone summary of the project describing its purpose and activities (maximum 2000 characters, including spaces).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please describe in detail your proposed project that will be conducted with the PI at University of Oxford (maximum 20,000 characters, including spaces):

- Please include purpose, background, methods, collaborations, and the significance of the project. The proposal must clearly demonstrate the nature of interdisciplinarity and its novelty.
- It is encouraged to include co-mentors if needed to strengthen interdisciplinary elements of the project. If identified, please indicate potential co-mentor(s).
- Include a brief outline of how the grant period is planned and distributed between University of Oxford and the Danish host institution. Please specify by months where the periods will be spent.
- Describe the continuation of research activities upon return to Denmark and if relevant, the potential career trajectory following the grant period within the Danish research environment.

Use of abbreviations and acronyms should be limited and must be defined at first occurrence as abbreviations can have different meanings in different disciplines. The applications will be

assessed by a committee that are not necessarily experts within all disciplines covered by the call.

ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS

A maximum of four illustrations of 50 mb each can be uploaded here. Accepted formats are .jpg, .png, .gif, .bmp.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

Please provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 8000 characters, including spaces).

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief summary for non-experts in lay language. If the application is awarded a grant, the text may be used for publication (maximum 1000 characters, including spaces).

3.4 BUDGET

The budget only comprises the information entered in the BUDGET tab. Additional budget information attached under UPLOADS or added under any other tabs than BUDGET will not be considered. The budget must be entered in budget years following the grant period and not calendar years.

ELIGIBLE BUDGET EXPENSES

The total amount applied for should be up to DKK 4 million with approximately DKK 1 million per year. **A minimum of DKK 210,000 must be requested per year for total project-related costs** (i.e. operating expenses, equipment, conference participation, travel, publication costs and administrative expenses to be used during the research stay at University of Oxford). A minimum of 8% of the total project-related costs (i.e. a minimum of DKK 16,800 per year) must be reserved for administrative expenses to University of Oxford. If the project-related costs exceed DKK 210,000 these may be allocated for the Danish host institution for costs related to conference participation and travel. Please indicate in the budget which project-related costs are allocated for University of Oxford and the Danish host institution, respectively. The funds allocated to University of Oxford will be transferred as annual upfront instalments from the Danish host institution to the hosting department at University of Oxford during the years that the postdoctoral fellow is at University of Oxford. The applicant should discuss and get the PI at University of Oxford's approval on the use of these funds before submitting the application.

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses:

- **Salary for applicant** including pension, according to collective agreements of Danish public institutions for postdoctoral fellows. Applicants should apply for a full salary and should also check that this salary adhere to minimum salary required for postdoctoral fellows at Oxford University. Postdoctoral Fellow salaries at Oxford are typically on Oxford's 'grade 7' – please see here for details of the current salary range: <https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/salary-scales>. Salary and expenses to living abroad will be paid directly to the grantee from the Danish host institution. **Note:** *salary for other people than the applicant (scientific or administrative) employed on the project cannot be covered by this grant.*
- **Operating expenses** related to the research, including consumables, chemicals, and reagents.
- **Equipment** required for the project, however, not exceeding 20% of the budget total.

- **Conference participation.** Up to DKK 50,000 per budget year can be requested for travel and registration expenses in relation to presenting the project at conferences and workshops.
- **Travel** expenses directly related to the project, i.e., experiments carried out in other labs for a limited period.
- **Publication costs** of results emanating from the research project. Up to DKK 25,000 per budget year can be requested.
- **Bench fee** can be included in the budget for support of individual researchers to cover expenses needed to conduct the proposed research. Bench fee is calculated per academic employee actively working on the project and may only be used for expenses that are related to the research project and which cannot be included within another individual budget category. The budget must specify the expenses covered by the bench fee, which may include:
 - Common or shared laboratory expenses and consumables
 - Laboratory utilities (electricity, gas, water)
 - Maintenance of essential equipment
 - Service contracts
 - Technical and IT support, library access

Note that bench fee cannot cover rent, administrative support, representation, social contributions etc. To include a bench fee in the budget, the fee must be a part of the general expense policy of the administrating/host institution, and it must apply for all employees independently of funding source. Documentation that the department has a general bench fee policy must be attached. An unspecified bench fee without documentation will not be accepted. The bench fee can be maximum DKK 8,000 per month.

- **Relocation expenses related to travelling and relocation** to and from Denmark of up to DKK 100,000 over total grant period. Must be placed under 'Dissemination, training, education'. **Note:** *this budget category must align with the submitted plan for how the grant period is distributed.*
- **Expenses related to living abroad**, up to DKK 60,000 per year for the years spend abroad, for health insurance, visa, etc. for recipient and possibly family. Additional 50,000 per year abroad can be requested if the applicant has child/children. Must be placed under 'Dissemination, training, education'.
 - *If required by the international host country or the host institution, the Danish host institution must ensure that the fellow is covered by sufficient health insurance, e.g. through own coverage, by reimbursement to the fellow, or by the university signing up for such insurance directly.*
- **Direct administrative expenses** for the Danish host institution for up to 5 % of the total funding applied for. This item is independent of the administrative expenses allocated for University of Oxford. The following applies:
 - can cover non-scientific, administrative expenses in relation to the project, such as accounting, administration related to payment of salaries and purchasing, hiring, as well as auditing and financial reporting on the project,
 - cannot cover administrative expenses that are not directly related to the project,
 - is not automatically included in the grant and must be stated/applied for in the application budget but should not be specified in detail.

GRANT PERIOD

Before you can fill in the budget template, start by entering the start and end dates for the grant. NORMA then generates a grant period in whole years, which is reflected in the budget template. The grant period is the duration of NNF's grant for the project, which for this call is up to 4 years.

CREATE BUDGET– see budget example on last page.

After saving the project start and end dates, the budget template will become available to edit. The budget will open in a new tab, in which you will need to add the subcategories you need for your budget. Please follow the instructions at the top of the screen to complete the budget and see the budget example at the bottom for inspiration.

Notes:

- The budget continuously saves changes you've made without the need to manually save. You are free to leave the budget at any time and come back at a later point.
- When you are done filling in your budget, please use the *SAVE AND CLOSE* button. This will check that all information has been filled out correctly and in accordance with the guidelines, saving the budget to your application.
- You can always return to the *BUDGET* tab. A summary of the budget will be displayed, review it to ensure that it is correct.
- The full budget details can be viewed or edited at any time before submission of the application by reopening the budget template.

Any comments about the budget can be entered in the *SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION* field.

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTE)

Budget item (illustrative purposes only)	FTE	Description (illustrative purposes only)
Salary – PostDoc	1	PostDoc (1 person-year full time)



For salary items, the number of full-time equivalents in years must be stated in the field FTE.

3.5 APPENDICES

- A signed letter of support from the PI at University of Oxford including an endorsement of the proposed research project (**Support Letter**).
- A signed letter from the Danish administrating institution that guarantees the return and integration to this institute following the years at University of Oxford, confirms its role in administering the fellowship throughout the entire grant period, and is aware of University of Oxford's rules regarding IP rights. Must be signed by the head of the institute (**Hosting Letter**).
- One other professional letter of recommendation (**Recommendation Letter**).

- If relevant: A statement confirming expected completion of PhD before fellowship start date from current PhD supervisor (only in case the applicant has yet to complete his/her PhD) **(PhD Completion Letter)**.
- If relevant: Documentation that the Danish host institution and/or the department at Oxford has a general bench fee policy **(Bench fee documentation)**.

All uploads must be in PDF format. NORMA automatically places these uploads at the end of the application. Please respect the page limitation and the upload requirements stated in the call. Uploads in excess of these limits may not be considered for evaluation.

December 2023

Postdoctoral Fellow Budget EXAMPLE

The total amount applied for should be up to DKK 4 million, with approximately DKK 1 million per year.

A minimum of DKK 210,000 must be requested per year for total project-related costs of which a minimum of DKK 16,800 per year must be reserved for administrative expenses at the international institution. Follow instructions section 3.4 in guidelines.

In this example the applicant will stay abroad for the first 3.2 years and return to Denmark for the last 10 months.

Bench fee only applicable if institution has a common bench fee policy
Expenses which summed up constitute the **Base** from which the Administrative expenses to international institution is calculated.

Base = sum of bold amounts in example
Administrative expenses to international institution
= (base/92)8

Direct administrative expenses of 5% can be applied for the Danish host institution, they are calculated automatically in NORMA

FTE = 1 (1 Full Time Equivalent)

Total
55,000 Base year 4
4,783 Administrative expenses to international institution
80,000
59,783 Total amount to be transferred to international institution, of which 8% constitute the administrative expenses
1,000,000

25,500 Base year 3
25,632 Administrative expenses to international institution
309,632 Total amount to be transferred to international institution, of which 8% constitute the administrative expenses

305,000 Base year 2
26,522 Administrative expenses to international institution
381,522 Total amount to be transferred to international institution, of which 8% constitute the administrative expenses

12 months Abroad

Year 2 - Budget

Year 1 - Budget

12 months Abroad

Year 3 - Budget

Year 4 - Budget

2 months Abroad 10 months in Denmark

Order	Category	Subcategory	Tags	Year 1 - Budget	Year 2 - Budget	Year 3 - Budget	Year 4 - Budget	Total
1.1	Salary	Main applicant		59,700	59,838	59,935	59,935	239,408
2.1	Operation	Bench fee *		6000	6000	6000	1000	19000
2.1	Operation	Bench fee *		-	-	-	80000	80000
2.2	Operation	Operating expenses		-	10,000	-	-	10,000
2.3	Operation	Operating expenses		11,500	8000	10,000	10,000	40,500
2.4	Operation	Operating expenses		-	-	-	140,000	140,000
2.5	Operation	Operating expenses		23,043	26,522	25,632	4,783	80,000
3.1	Diversification, training, education	Conference participation		30,000	20,000	30,000	30,000	110,000
3.2	Diversification, training, education	Publication costs		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	100,000
3.3	Diversification, training, education	Conference participation		35,000	-	-	-	35,000
3.4	Diversification, training, education	Rehabilitation expenses		50,000	-	-	50,000	100,000
3.5	Diversification, training, education	Rehabilitation expenses		60,000	60,000	60,000	10,000	190,000
4.1	Administration	Direct administrative expenses		49,760	49,939	50,009	50,936	199,798
	Total			995,204	995,863	1,000,176	1,000,724	3,995,967

For execution please contact Grant Manager see p 3 in the guidelines.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation

The Novo Nordisk Foundation is an independent Danish Foundation with corporate interests. The objective of the Novo Nordisk Foundation is twofold: To provide a stable basis for the commercial and research activities conducted by the companies within the Novo Group and to support scientific and humanitarian purposes.

The vision of the Novo Nordisk Foundation is to improve people's health and the sustainability of society and the planet.