

Guidelines for applicants

**PROJECT GRANTS
IN THE NATURAL
AND TECHNICAL
SCIENCES 2024**



Facts about the call

Total amount available for granting:

DKK 70 million

Amount available per grant:

Grants of up to DKK 3.4 million for up to 3 years - with a possible extension to 4 years to cover 4-year PhD stipends

Call opens:

21 June 2024

Call closes:

4 September 2024, 14.00 CEST

Applicant notification:

December 2024

Earliest start date:

1 January 2025

Latest start date:

1 January 2026

Review committee:

Committee for the Natural and Technical Sciences

Contacts:

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All Grant Recipients must comply with the 'General Terms and Conditions' for grants from the Novo Nordisk Foundation (the Foundation).

The Foundation will treat all applicant and application information confidentially. Read more about how the Foundation processes personal data under 'privacy & security' in the online application system, NORMA. See how to access NORMA in section 2 of these guidelines.

You can find more information about the Foundation's application and granting process at the NORMA Help Centre. Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.



1 Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences 2024

1.1 Purpose

The call for Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences seeks to promote Danish fundamental research at the highest international level within the natural and technical sciences, particularly for projects with potential interdisciplinary applications within life science, or health science, or sustainability.

1.2 Areas of support

The call supports fundamental research within the natural and technical sciences, including, e.g., physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, and technical sciences.

In alignment with the 2030 Strategy for the Novo Nordisk Foundation, applications for Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences **must describe how the outcome of the project may have potential future applications within life science, health science, or sustainability**. Such potential applications may be within the project period but could also be on timescales longer than the project period.

NOT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS CALL

The Novo Nordisk Foundation offers similar calls for project grants within the five areas listed below. Projects focused on these five areas are not eligible for the Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences call:

- Bioscience and basic biomedicine
- Endocrinology and metabolism
- Industrial and environmental biotechnology
- Plant science, agriculture, and food science
- Clinical and translational medicine

Other areas which are not within the scope of the call (the list is not exhaustive):

- Cosmology
- Zoology
- Biotechnology

- Projects that are primarily retrospective or primarily of historical value

Applicants may submit only one application for one of the 2024 Project Grant calls.

Applicants are welcome to contact the Foundation with questions regarding eligible areas of support for the Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences call.

1.3 Eligibility

Who

Principal investigators are eligible to apply, i.e., independent researchers who have already established their own line of research or researchers who are in the process of establishing themselves as independent researchers.

The applicant must be at least 80% affiliated with the administering Danish research institution.

As this grant cannot cover salary of the grantee, the applicant must be guaranteed his or her own salary for the entire project period from other sources.

Applications from PhD students will not be taken into consideration.

Where

The research activities applied for must be anchored at a university or other non-profit research institution in Denmark.

A signed hosting letter from the administering Danish research institution must be provided (see section 3.5 for requirements).

What

The application must describe a clearly defined research project with an appropriate budget. The project can be an independent project, a delimited project, or a clearly defined part of a larger, running project. In the latter case, the large project must be briefly described.

Project grants in natural and technical sciences are individual grants at the disposal of the applicant. If the applied project involves collaboration, the collaboration must be described in the project description, however, the applicant must be the clear driver of the project and the applicant's research must be central to the project. Invitation of co-applicants is not possible within this call.

IMPORTANT RULES

- Applicants may submit only one application to one of the 2024 NNF calls of the Project Grant type, which include Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences, Bioscience and Basic Biomedicine, Endocrinology and Metabolism, Plant Science, Agriculture, and Food Biotechnology, Industrial Biotechnology and Environmental Biotechnology, and Clinical and Translational Medicine.
- The application deadline for Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences is aligned with the deadline for the Project Grants in Bioscience and Basic Biomedicine.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation will transfer applications between these calls if judged to be scientifically appropriate.

- Applicants for Project Grants in the Natural and Technical Sciences are not allowed to be the principal investigator of the following grant types from the Novo Nordisk Foundation at the time of commencing the Project Grant: Investigator Grants, Exploratory Interdisciplinary Synergy Grants, Interdisciplinary Synergy Grants, Challenge Grants, NERD Grants, Project Grants.

1.4 Funding

The grant budget for this call is up to DKK 70 million annually.

Applicants may apply for between DKK 300,000 and DKK 1.13 million per budget year for projects with a grant period of 1–3 years. Funds can be unevenly distributed over the project period; however, the total budget frame must be within DKK 300,000 – 3.4 million, correlating with the number of project years.

If the project includes a PhD stipend following a 4+4 scheme, the project period can be extended to 4 years, but with a maximum total budget of DKK 3.4 million.

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses directly related to the project:

- **Salary for employees:** Postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, technicians, and researchers working on the project. Salary expenses cannot cover project employees of similar or higher academic employment level than the applicant.
- **Tuition fee:** For PhD students (maximum DKK 80,000 per budget year) - must be specified separately in the budget.
- **Operating expenses:** Consumables, materials, chemicals, utensils, data collection, analyses, etc.
- **Equipment:** Smaller equipment and apparatus required for the project.
- **Conference participation:** Travel and registration expenses in relation to presenting the project at conferences and workshops.
- **Travel:** Expenses for, e.g., experiments carried out in other labs for a limited time, meetings, or workshops.
- **Publication costs:** Of results emanating from the proposed research.
- **Project supplement**

Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

For each salary entry, please specify the FTE in years within the designated FTE field. This will indicate the proportion of a full-time position that the project funding will support for each year of the grant period. One full-time employee for one year equals 1.0 FTE.

Project supplement for research grants: (Danish universities only)

The project supplement contributes to the coverage of indirect costs at Danish universities, and replaces budget posts such as administrative costs, bench fee and parental leave.

More information on the joint model for project supplement is found at [Universities Denmark's website](#). Questions related to the project supplement should be directed to the research support units at your university.

The Foundation will not award funding for:

- Own salary for principal investigator/applicant
- Commercial activities
- Overhead/indirect costs (such as rent, electricity, water and maintenance)
- Double funding of projects:
 - If the applicant has received funding for the proposed project from other sources, in part or in full, this must be accounted for in the budget, as no budgetary overlaps are allowed
 - If an identical or overlapping project proposal has been submitted to other funding institutions than the Foundation, it must be noted in the application
 - If the applicant receives funding for the project, or parts of the project, from other sources following submission of the application to the Foundation, the Foundation must be informed immediately

1.5 Language

The application and all additional materials must be submitted in English.

1.6 Application process

Overall timeline for the call:



When all applications have been assessed, applicants will be notified about whether they have been awarded a grant. The notification e-mail will be sent from norma-noreply@novo.dk to the e-mail address used when creating a profile in NORMA.

PLEASE NOTE: The Foundation does not provide feedback in case an application is declined.

1.7 Assessment criteria

NNF's [Committee for the Natural and Technical Sciences](#) will assess the applications based on the quality, novelty, and feasibility of the project, and the merits and commitment of the applicant.

During a trial period in 2022-2024, the grant selection procedure will encompass two parallel schemes: 1) Traditional committee-based evaluation. 2) Partial randomisation.

For both selection procedures, all applications are assessed by the committee and categorised as either “high quality” (fundable), or “non-meritorious” (not fundable). Only applications categorised as fundable will undergo further evaluation and potentially be selected for granting through either scheme 1) with traditional committee-based evaluation or through scheme 2) with partial randomisation.

Those fundable applications that are unanimously evaluated by the committees as highest rated will be granted. The remaining fundable applications, “the grey zone”, will undergo further normal assessment by the committee (scheme 1). In parallel to scheme 1, the applications allocated to the grey zone will undergo a randomisation process where all applications from the grey zone (including those selected by Scheme 1) will be randomly selected for funding, one application at a time, until the same total number of applications is reached through scheme 2 as selected for funding through scheme 1.

Successful applicants will not be informed about which scheme their application was selected through.

The purpose of implementing partial randomisation in the evaluation procedure is to test new ways of grant-giving and generate new knowledge on open competition funding of research projects.

If you have an active grant from the Foundation, this may be taken into consideration in the evaluation of your application for a new grant. In general, it is recommended that the main applicant has delivered results on the active grant(s) before submission of a new application to the Foundation. If you apply while having an active grant from the Foundation, you must describe how the project you propose in this application is different from and/or coherent with the project(s) already funded and briefly describe the progress of the already funded project(s). This information should be included in the **Project Description**.



2 The application and grant management system NORMA

2.1 Creating and submitting an application

The Foundation uses the application and grant management system NORMA:

<https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk>

If you do not have a user profile in NORMA, you can create one by clicking **Register** on the login page. The main applicant should only have one user profile. Please use your work e-mail address for registration.

The registered user who submits an application will be legally responsible for the truthfulness of the content of the application.

You can find guidance on how to create and submit an application at: [NORMA Help Centre](#).

If you experience technical problems and cannot find a solution in the NORMA Help Centre, please contact NORMA Support: norma-support@novo.dk.



3 Application content

This section provides guidelines on the content required in the sections of the online application form for this call. Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.

3.1 Applicant

The **Applicant** tab pertains to information about all those involved in an application, meaning the main applicant or contact person applying on behalf of an organisation/institution.

Please note the following requirements:

- **CV:** Maximum 4,000 characters. Include in your CV a short bibliographic overview summarising total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first authorships, number of corresponding authorships, number of citations, and *h*-index.
- **Publication list:** Maximum 5,000 characters. Include the up to 10 most relevant publications for evaluating your merits. Include names of all authors for each publication with your own name highlighted. You are strongly encouraged to include a link to an updated profile (with full publication list) in ORCID, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, or similar.
- **Summary of own research:** Maximum 2,000 characters. Summarise your research focus and main contributions and achievements relevant for the present application.
- **Supplementary information:**
 - Describe your terms of employment (where the project is to be carried out). Non-permanent employees should indicate when their current contracts are running out and how their salaries are covered. Tenure-track employees should indicate when they are up for tenure.
 - Include an overview of your current active grants and other grants obtained within the past five years and indicate how much of your research time (in %) is committed to each of these grants.
 - Indicate how much of your research time (in %) you intend to commit to the proposed project.

3.2 Institution

Please provide information about the institution where the grant will be administered. This institution is where the main applicant will be employed during the grant period, and the institution that will ultimately be responsible for administering the grant, including budgeting, financial reporting and staff supported by the grant.



It can take up to five working days to register a new administrating institution in NORMA.

The application cannot be submitted before the institution has been registered.

3.3 Proposal

Describe the project using the fields in the **Proposal** tab.

PROJECT TITLE

Please provide a short title for the project.

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief stand-alone summary of the project describing its purpose and key activities (maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please describe your research clearly and in detail (maximum 20,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters), including the following information:

- Purpose, state-of-the-art, background, hypotheses, methods, implementation, novelty, feasibility, and significance of the project outcome.
- In a separate paragraph: How the outcome of the proposed research may have potential future application, possibly in the long-term, within life science, health science, or sustainability.
- Synergy of the proposed project with already funded activities or ongoing projects.
- If the applied project involves collaboration, describe its nature and purpose, and the role of the collaborator.
- In a separate paragraph: If you are resubmitting a project proposal that has been submitted to Project Grants for the Natural and Technical Sciences in a previous call, highlight changes and improvements.

ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS

A maximum of four illustrations can be uploaded here.

The following file formats for illustrations are accepted in the system: JPG, JPEG, PNG and BMP. The maximum accepted size for each illustration is 50 MB and 1050*1650 pixels.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

Please provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 8,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

If not applicable, please fill in N/A.

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 1,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

3.4 Budget

Enter the project grant period, and the budget template will become available.

If applying for a 4-year project (due to a 4+4 PhD student), the budget for the fourth year should be included in the budget for year 3. If the project is granted, the project period can subsequently be extended by the grant holder through a change request to the NNF.

Only budget information submitted via the **Budget** tab will be considered in the review process. Any additional budget information attached under **Appendices** (or any other tabs) will not be considered.

3.5 Appendices

Please provide a signed **Hosting letter** from the administering institution, confirming that the institution will host the project, including providing the required infrastructure, such as laboratory and office facilities, and administration of the grant.

The upload must be in PDF format. NORMA automatically places the uploads at the end of the application.

Appendices other than those specified here are not permitted and will not be included in the evaluation.